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By JULES VERNE

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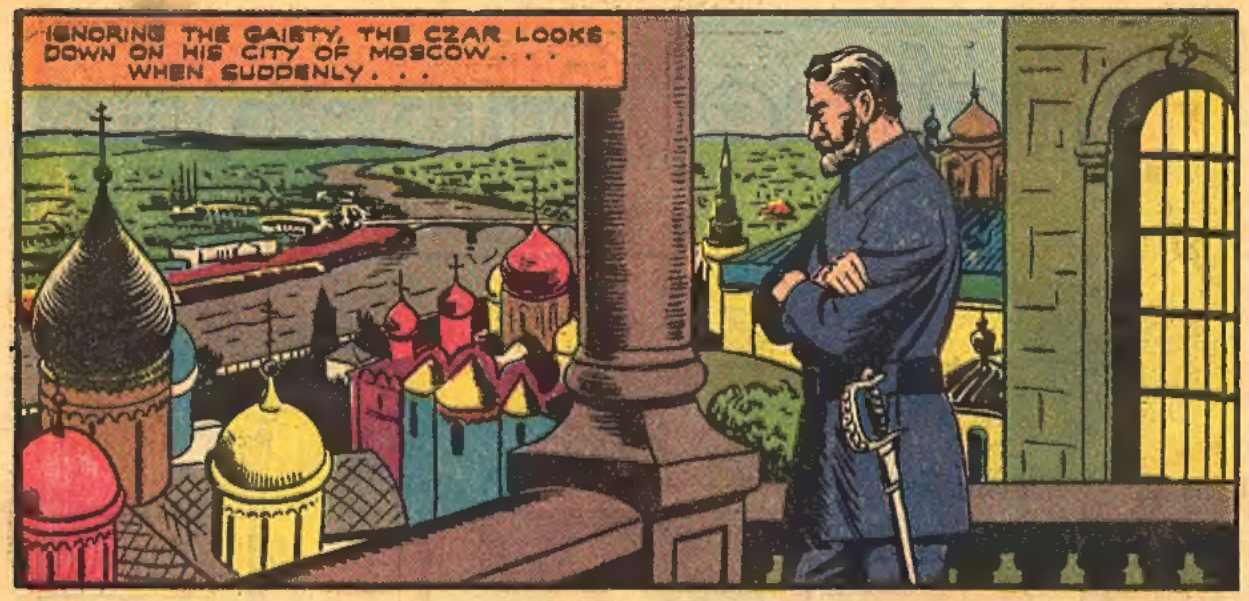
Michael Strogoff

A COURIER of THE CZAR

By JULES VERNE
ILLUSTRATED BY: ARNOLD HICKS
ADAPTED BY: PAT ADAM

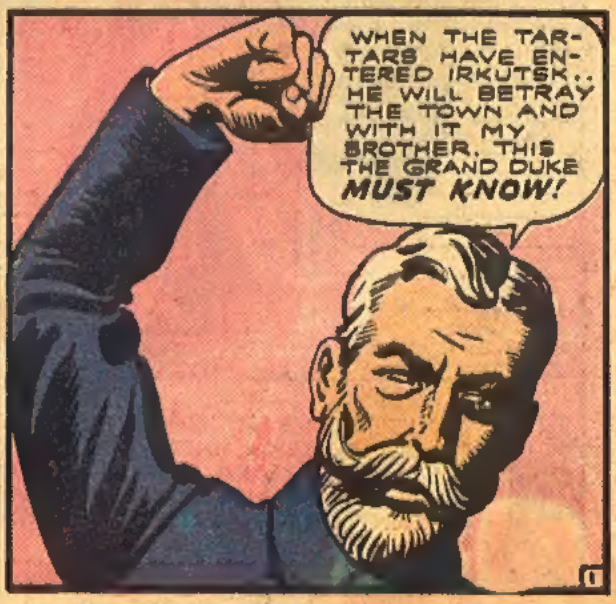
IT IS THE YEAR 1840. THE PLACE IS MOSCOW. AS MIDNIGHT STRIKES, ABLE DANCERS WHIRL THROUGH THE GRAND SALONS OF THE PALACE. AND IN THE GALA CROWD, IT IS ALCIDE JOLIVET, FRENCH NEWSPAPERMAN AND HIS RIVAL, HARRY BLOUNT, THE ENGLISHMAN, WHO SENSE THE UNDER-CURRENT OF DANGER... *SOMETHING IS IN THE AIR!*


IGNORING THE GAIETY, THE CZAR LOOKS DOWN ON HIS CITY OF MOSCOW . . . WHEN SUDDENLY . . .

SIRE, A FRESH DISPATCH FROM TOMSK. THE WIRE IS CUT BEYOND THAT CITY.
A COURIER! THIS MOMENT!

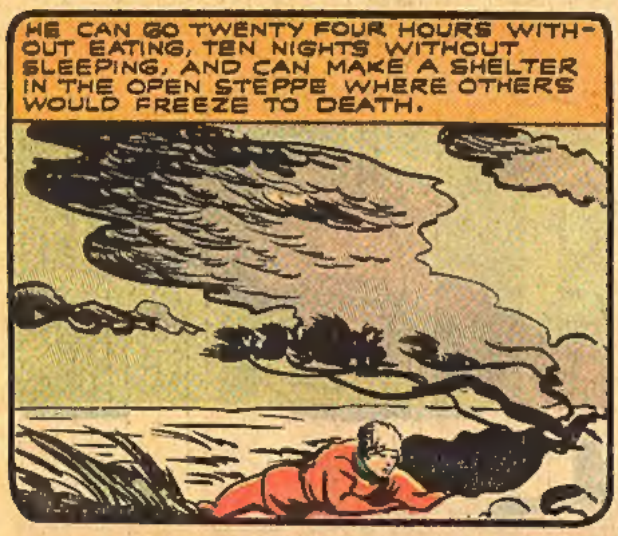
THE TARTARS HAVE NOT YET ADVANCED BEYOND THE IRTISH AND OBI, SIRE.
TELL ME ALL YOU KNOW OF THE REBEL, IVAN OGAREFF.

TWO YEARS AGO HE WAS EXILED TO SIBERIA, SIRE.
YES, THE GRAND DUKE EXILED HIM.. AND NOW HE POURS TARTAR HORDES INTO SIBERIA. THE STORM HAS BURST LIKE A THUNDER-CLAP. MOREOVER, IVAN OGAREFF, THIRSTING FOR VENGEANCE, AIMS AT THE LIFE OF THE GRAND DUKE, MY BROTHER!


WHEN THE TARTARS HAVE ENTERED IRKUTSK.. HE WILL BETRAY THE TOWN AND WITH IT MY BROTHER. THIS THE GRAND DUKE MUST KNOW!

A COURIER WILL HAVE TO PASS THE RANKS OF THE REBELS AND INVADERS. HE MUST DISPLAY ALMOST SUPERHUMAN COURAGE.. BUT WITH A CLEAR HEAD AND A FIRM HEART, MUCH CAN BE DONE.
SHALL I BE ABLE TO FIND THIS HEAD AND HEART?
THE BEST COURIER FOR THIS MISSION WAS MICHAEL STROGOFF... FOR...

WHEN FOURTEEN, MICHAEL KILLED HIS FIRST BEAR, AND DRAGGED THE HUGE ANIMAL'S SKIN MANY *VERSTS TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.
* VERST = APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF A MILE.


HE CAN GO TWENTY FOUR HOURS WITHOUT EATING, TEN NIGHTS WITHOUT SLEEPING, AND CAN MAKE A SHELTER IN THE OPEN STEPPE WHERE OTHERS WOULD FREEZE TO DEATH.

HE HAS LEARNED TO READ SLIGHT SIGNS. THE FORMS OF ICICLES... VAGUE SOUNDS IN THE AIR.. A FLIGHT OF BIRDS. TEMPERED BY SNOW, HE HAS A FRAME OF IRON.

...SO MICHAEL STROGOFF WAS ORDERED TO REPORT TO THE CZAR.
ARE YOU THE COURIER FOR WHOM I SENT?
MICHAEL STROGOFF, SIRE, CAPTAIN IN THE CORPS OF COURIERS OF THE CZAR.

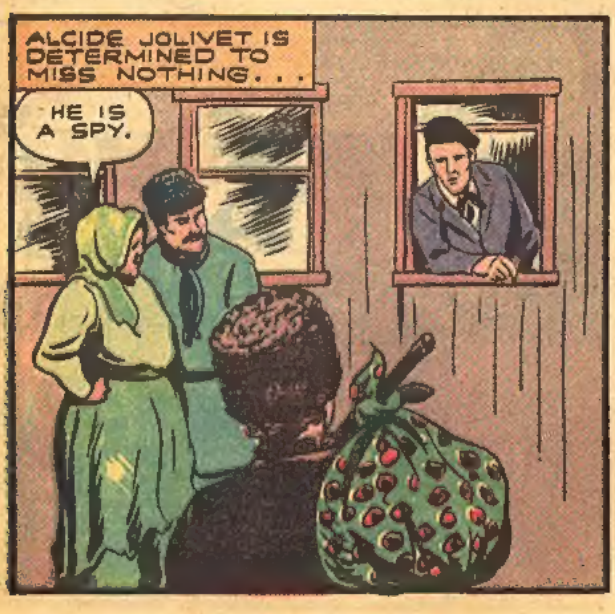
HERE IS A LETTER WHICH I CHARGE THEE, MICHAEL STROGOFF, TO DELIVER INTO THE HANDS OF THE GRAND DUKE, AND TO NO OTHER.

BEWARE OF THE TRAITOR, IVAN OGAREFF.. AND IF THOU DOST SEE THY MOTHER, THERE WILL BE A RISK OF BEING RECOGNIZED.. THOU MUST NOT SEE HER.
I HAVE NOT SEEN MY MOTHER FOR THREE YEARS.

I SHALL NOT SEE HER.
I SHALL PASS OR THEY SHALL KILL ME.

GO THEN.. MICHAEL STROGOFF.. GO FOR GOD, FOR RUSSIA.. FOR MY BROTHER AND FOR MYSELF.

DISGUISED AS NICHOLAS KORPANOFF, A MERCHANT, MICHAEL BOARDS THE TRAIN TO NIJNI-NOVGOROD. A REVOLVER UNDER HIS BELT.. AND A SIBERIAN KNIFE IN HIS POCKET.


ALCIDE JOLIVET IS DETERMINED TO MISS NOTHING...
HE IS A SPY.

TOO MANY QUESTIONS BRING NO INFORMATION...
TRAVELERS VERY CLOSE AS TO POLITICAL MATTERS.

IN ANOTHER COMPARTMENT, HARRY BLOUNT, SPEAKING LITTLE .. HAS HEARD MUCH . . .
AGAIN THEY SPEAK OF WAR.

Fellow travelers anxious... nothing is talked of but war.

WHO CAN SHE BE, TRAVELING ALONE IN THESE TIMES?

Z-Z-Z-Z-Z

WAKE UP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HUH?
THANK YOU.

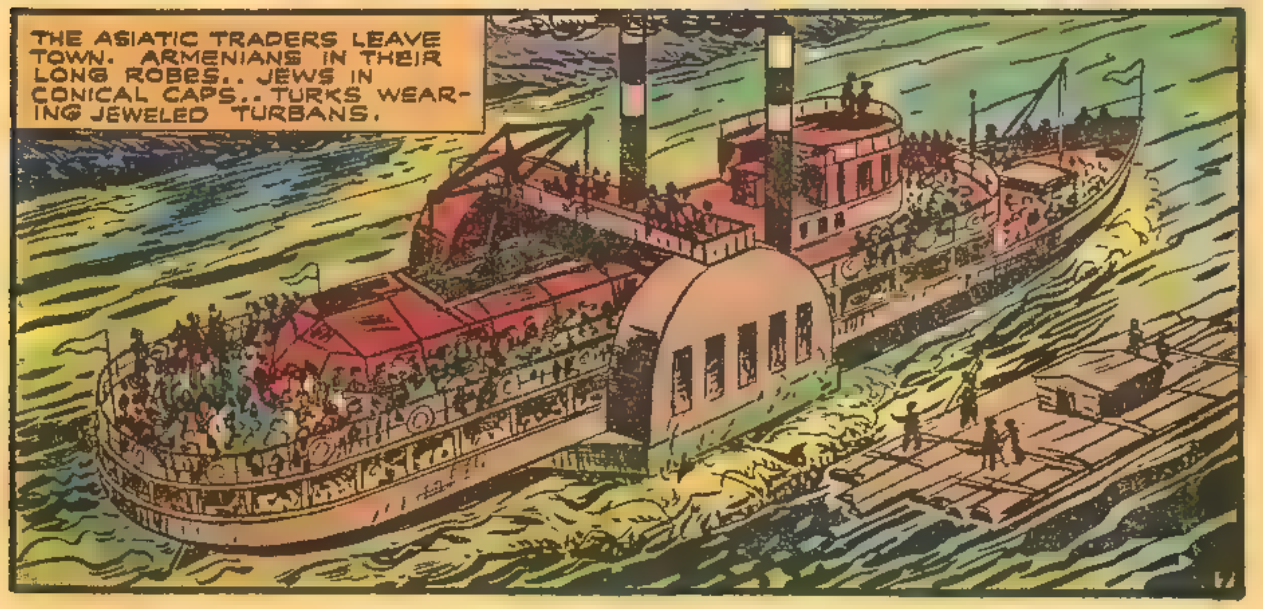
NEXT MORNING A FAIR! ALCIDE JOLIVET AND MICHAEL STROGOFF ARE ENJOYING IT TO THE FULL... NOT SO HARRY BLOUNT, WHO HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO SLEEP IN THE OPEN AIR DURING THE NIGHT.
WHAT A COLORFUL PLACE!
INDEED!
BAH!
I MUST FIND THE GIRL FROM THE TRAIN. HER PRESENCE WILL BE USEFUL IN DRAWING OFF SUSPICION THAT I AM A COURIER OF THE CZAR.
ALL STRANGERS ARE COMMANDED TO LEAVE THE PROVINCE.
THE TARTARS MENACE TOMSK
MAY GOD GUIDE ME..

THEY WON'T GIVE HER A PASS. SHE CANNOT LEAVE.

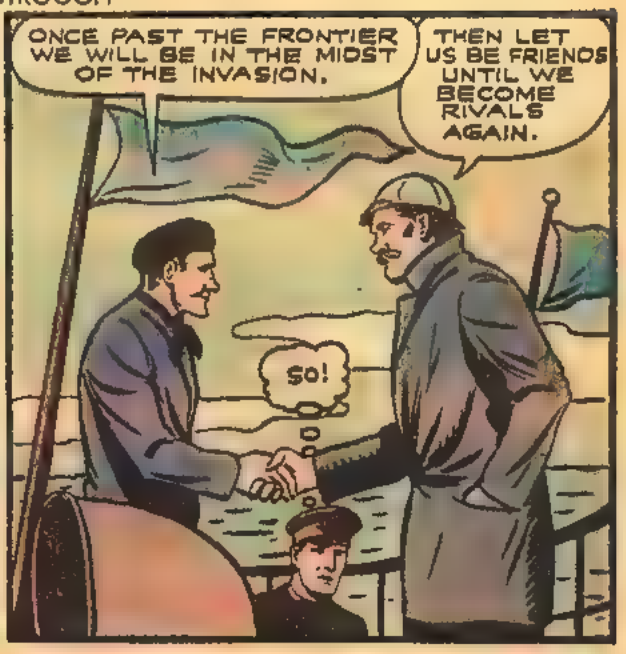
THE HEAD OF POLICE WILL SEE YOU.
GOOD!

I THOUGHT HE WOULD HELP ME.

A DARING TRICK OUTWITS THE POLICE.
SISTER, WE ARE AUTHORIZED TO CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY TO IRKUTSK. COME WITH ME!
I WILL FOLLOW YOU, BROTHER.
BROTHER AND SISTER!


THE ASIATIC TRADERS LEAVE TOWN. ARMENIANS IN THEIR LONG ROBES.. JEWS IN CONICAL CAPS.. TURKS WEARING JEWELED TURBANS.

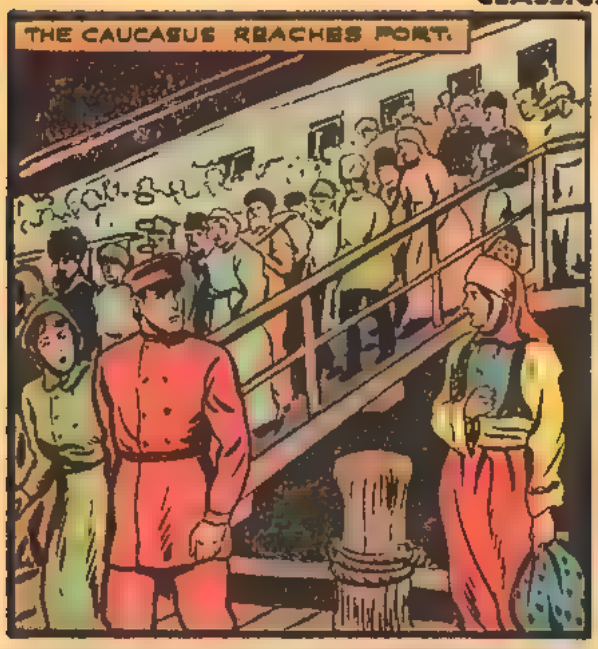
MY NAME IS NADIA FEDOR. MY MOTHER DIED AND I AM GOING TO IRKUTSK TO REJOIN MY FATHER.
YOU LOOK WEARY, LITTLE ONE, YOU MUST REST.


ONCE PAST THE FRONTIER WE WILL BE IN THE MIDST OF THE INVASION.
THEN LET US BE FRIENDS UNTIL WE BECOME RIVALS AGAIN.
SO!

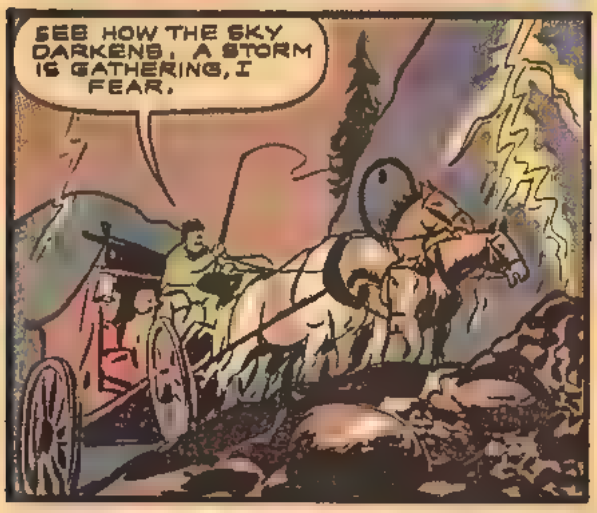
KEENLY OBSERVANT, MICHAEL MINGLED WITH THE PASSENGERS OF THE CAUCASUS.
PERHAPS I CAN PICK UP SOME NEWS HERE.

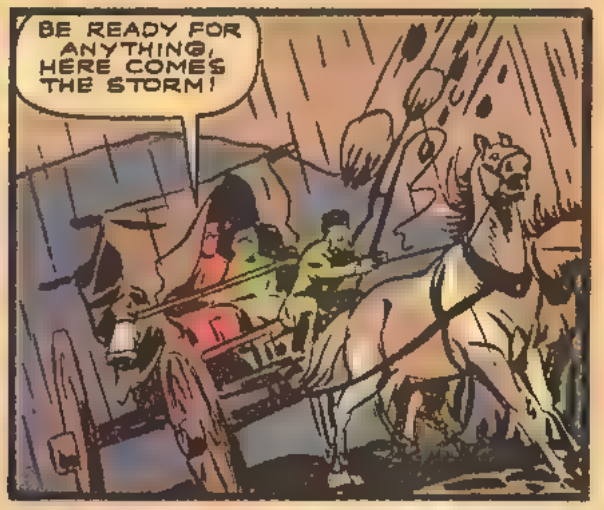
A COURIER HAS SET OUT FOR IRKUTSK.
EITHER THIS COURIER WILL ARRIVE TOO LATE, GANGARRE, OR NOT AT ALL.
THEY SPEAK OF ME!

WHO IS IT THAT KNOWS OF MY DEPARTURE?

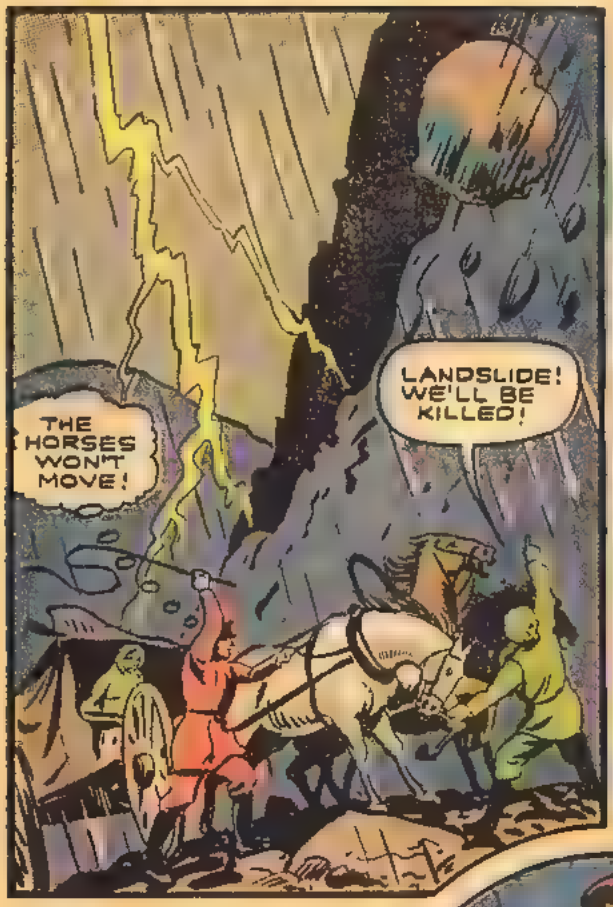

THE CAUCASUS REACHES PORT.

I WISH I COULD HAVE A MORE COMFORTABLE CONVEYANCE FOR YOU.
I WOULD HAVE GONE ON FOOT IF NECESSARY TO JOIN MY FATHER.


SEE HOW THE SKY DARKENS. A STORM IS GATHERING, I FEAR.


BE READY FOR ANYTHING, HERE COMES THE STORM!

DO NOT BE AFRAID, NADIA.
IF ONLY I COULD HELP!
HOLD!


THE HORSES WON'T MOVE!
LANDSLIDE! WE'LL BE KILLED!

ACTING IN A SPLIT SECOND, WITH SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, MICHAEL MOVES THE CART FROM THE PATH OF THE CRUSHING DOWNFALL.
HARK! SOMEONE ELSE IS IN PERIL AROUND THE BEND!
HELP! HELP!

DON'T LOOK BACK, CHILD!
OH!

COME WITH ME, NADIA!

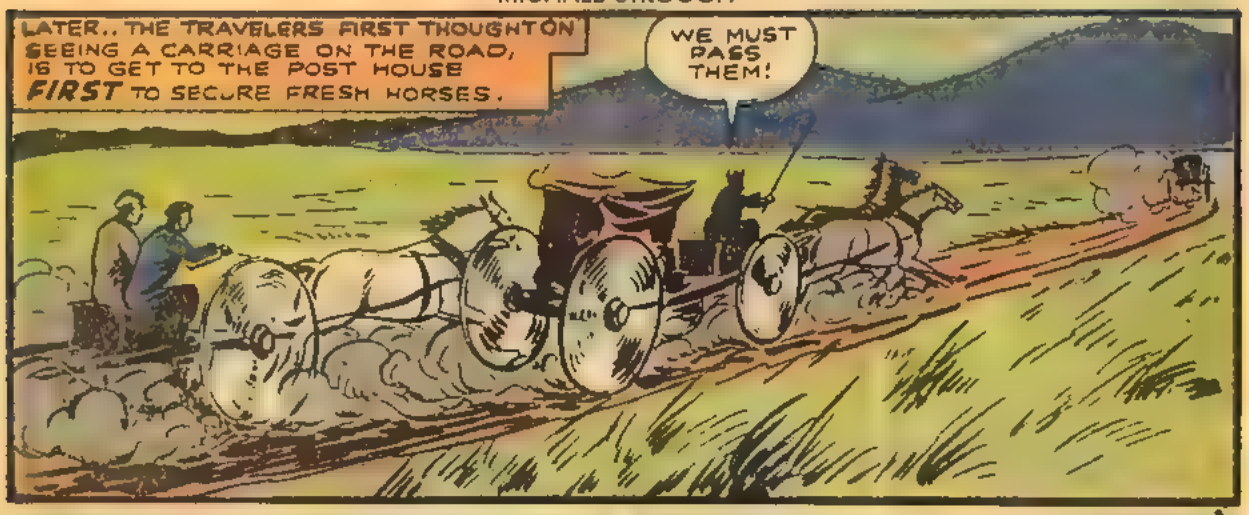
GENTLEMEN! I CAN LEND YOU ONE OF MY HORSES. FOLLOW ME, QUICKLY!
THANK HEAVEN! THIS IS INDEED A GENEROUS PROPOSAL!

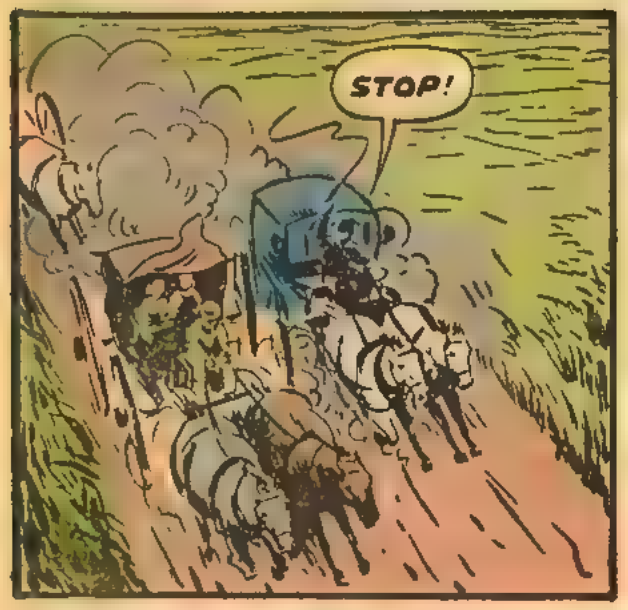
WHAT WAS THAT?
A PISTOL SHOT! NADIA!

HELP ME! HELP ME!

THEN...

BRAVO! FOR A SIMPLE MERCHANT, YOU HANDLE A HUNTER'S KNIFE IN MASTERLY FASHION!

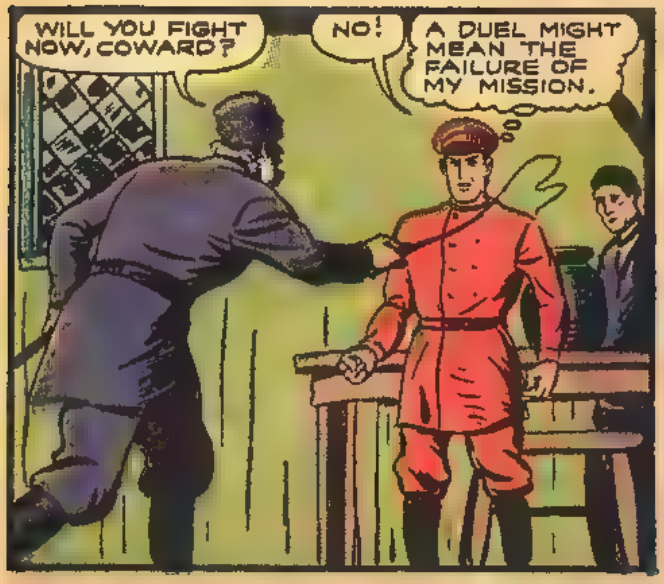

LATER.. THE TRAVELERS FIRST THOUGHT ON SEEING A CARRIAGE ON THE ROAD, IS TO GET TO THE POST HOUSE FIRST TO SECURE FRESH HORSES.
WE MUST PASS THEM!

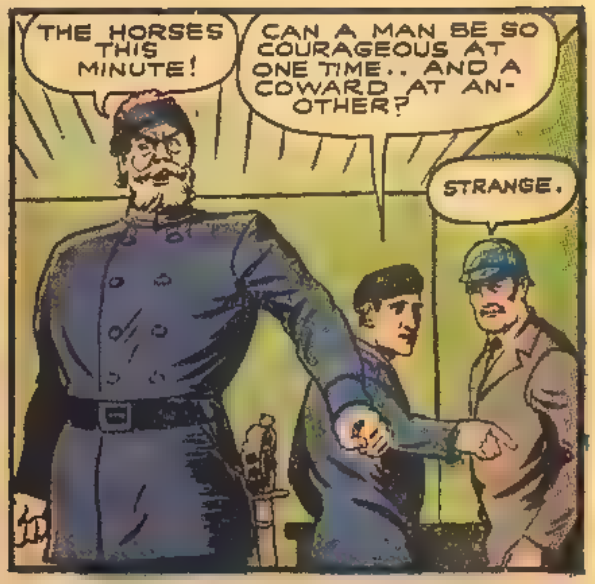

STOP!

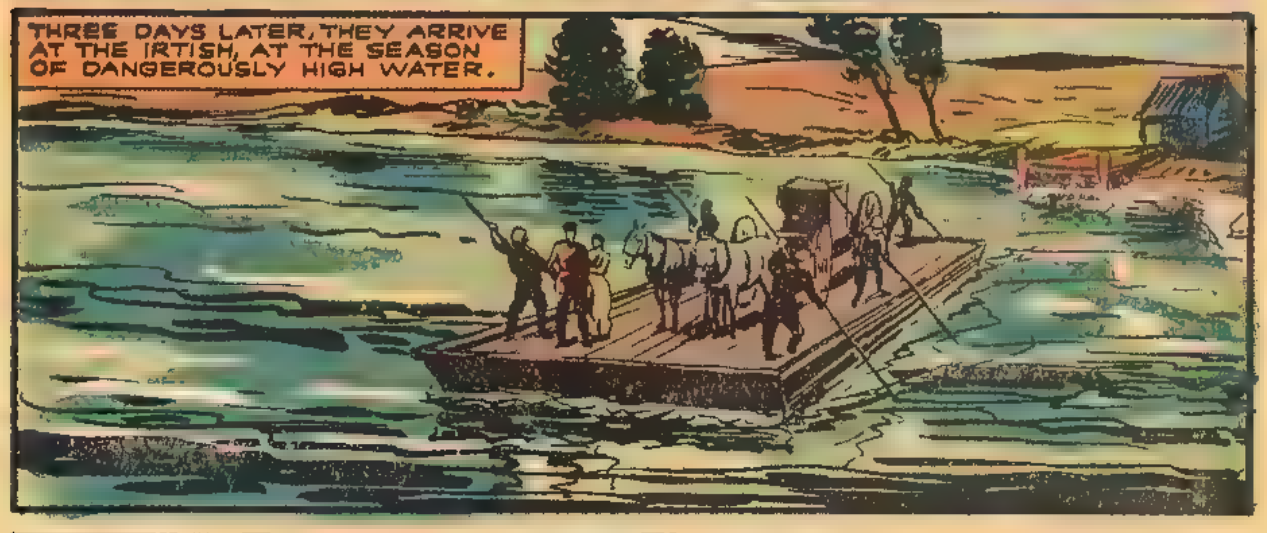
HOLD ON, NADIA, IT LOOKS AS IF WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO ARRIVE AT THE POST AFTER ALL!

WHY ARE THOSE HORSES HARNASSED TO THE TARANTASS AT THE DOOR? TAKE THEM OUT!
THOSE HORSES ARE ENGAGED BY ME. I HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE.

VERY WELL, THEY SHALL BELONG TO WHICHEVER OF US IS ABLE TO START. DEFEND YOUR-SELF!
I SHALL NOT FIGHT.

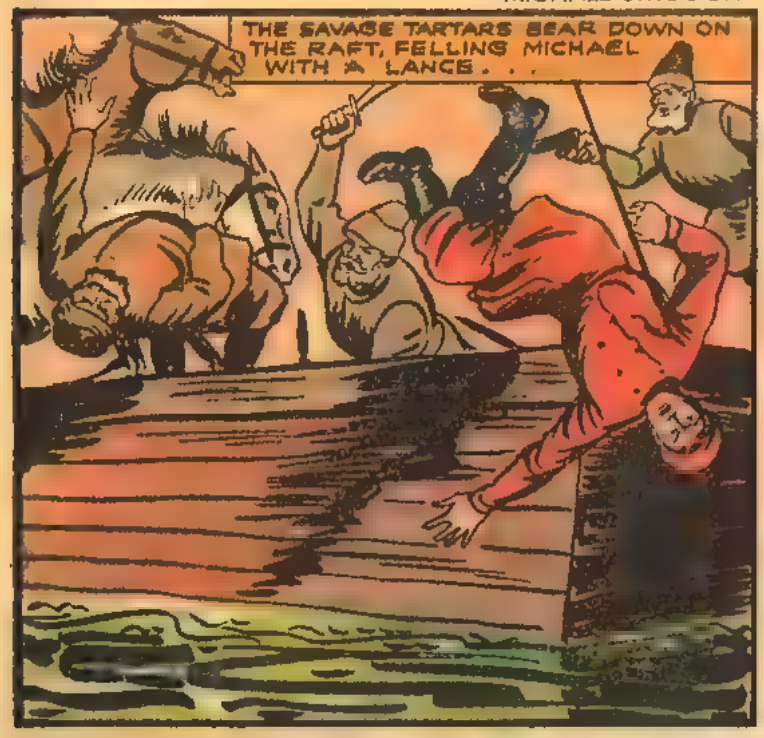

WILL YOU FIGHT NOW, COWARD?
NO!
A DUEL MIGHT MEAN THE FAILURE OF MY MISSION.


THE HORSES THIS MINUTE!
CAN A MAN BE SO COURAGEOUS AT ONE TIME.. AND A COWARD AT ANOTHER?
STRANGE.


THREE DAYS LATER, THEY ARRIVE AT THE IRTISH, AT THE SEASON OF DANGEROUSLY HIGH WATER.

LOOK OUT!
WE ARE LOST!

THE TARTARS.. THE TARTARS!
COURAGE! FIFTY ROUBLES IF WE REACH THE BANK.



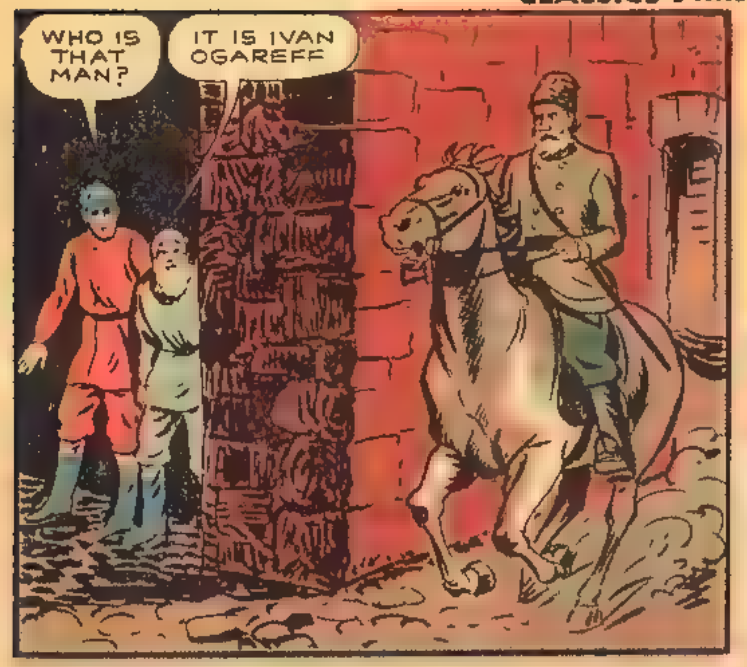
SWIMMING WOUNDED UNDER WATER, THE COURIER OF THE CZAR AT LAST REACHES THE BANK.

FRIEND, HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN IN THY HUT?

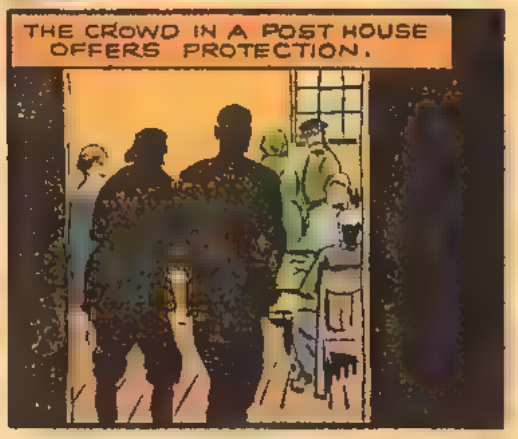
THREE DAYS, LITTLE FATHER.

THIS IS OMSK. IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE TARTARS.

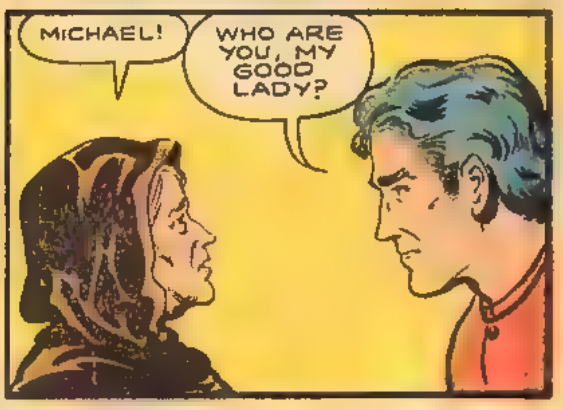
THREE DAYS LOST!

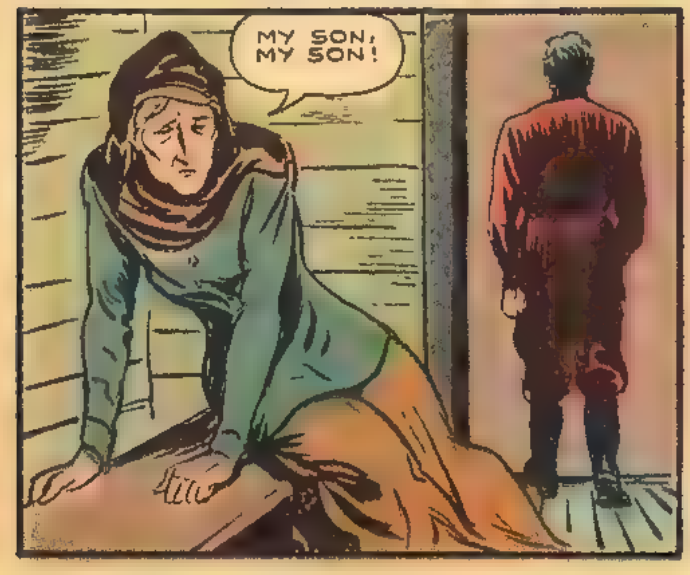

WHO IS THAT MAN?
IT IS IVAN OGAREFF

HE!

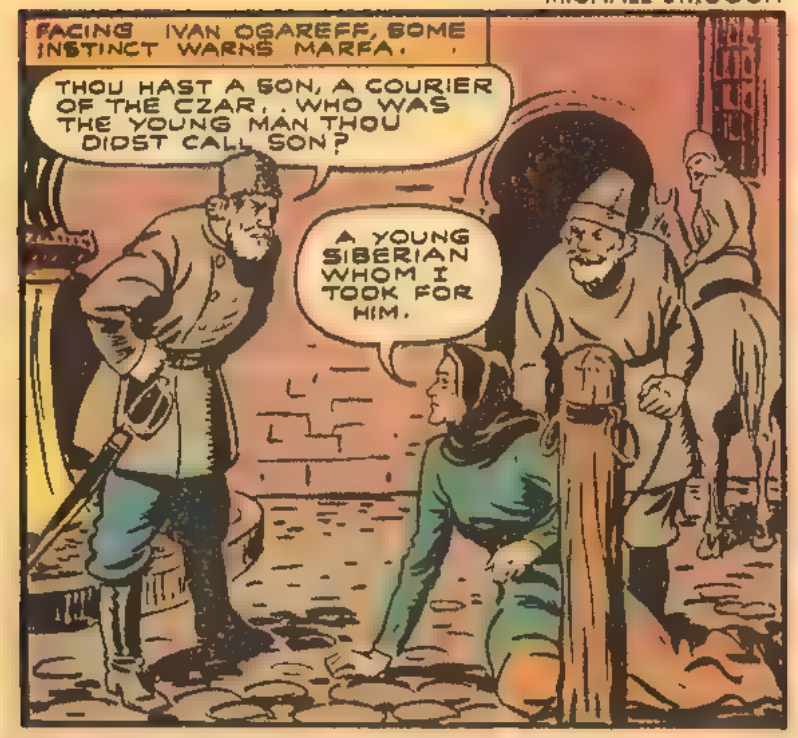

THE CROWD IN A POST HOUSE OFFERS PROTECTION.

BUT SUDDENLY A CRY PENETRATES TO THE DEPTHS OF MICHAEL'S SOUL.
MY SON!


MICHAEL!
WHO ARE YOU, MY GOOD LADY?


MY SON, MY SON!

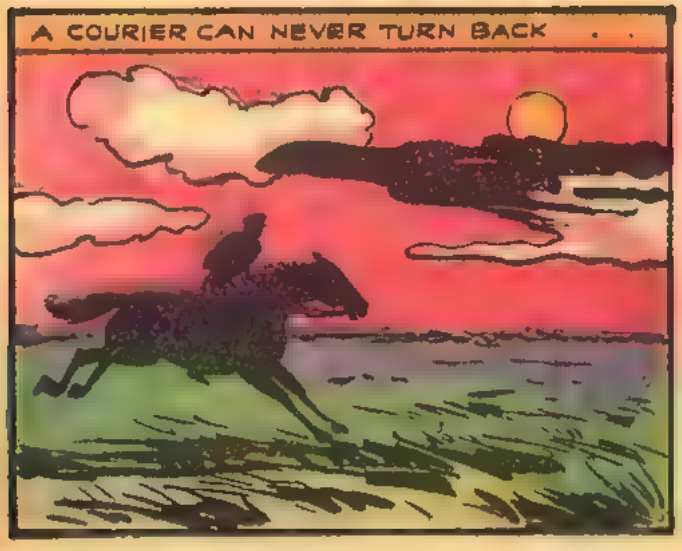
MARFA STROGOFF, COME!

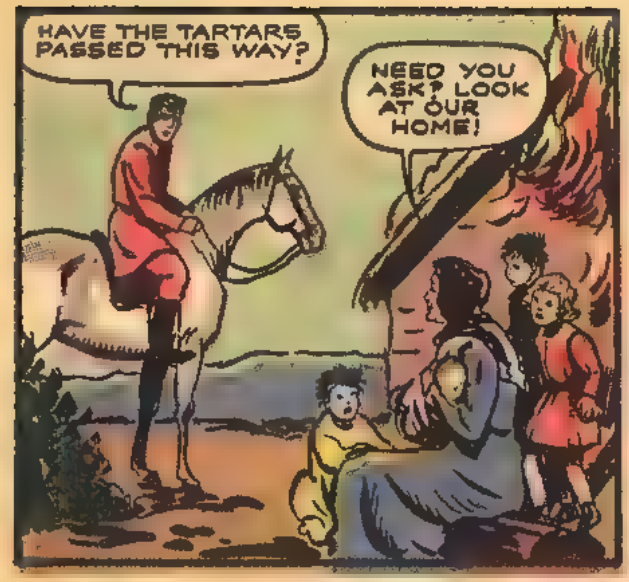

FACING IVAN OGAREFF, SOME INSTINCT WARNS MARFA.
THOU HAST A SON, A COURIER OF THE CZAR, . WHO WAS THE YOUNG MAN THOU DIDST CALL SON?
A YOUNG SIBERIAN WHOM I TOOK FOR HIM.

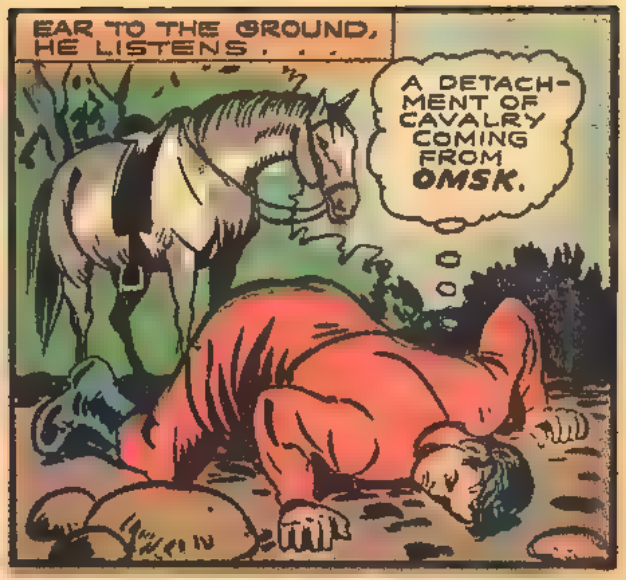
TELL THE TRUTH! DOST THOU KNOW, OLD WOMAN, THAT I CAN TORTURE THEE? LET THIS WOMAN BE CONDUCTED TO TOMSK!
NO! NOT TOMSK!

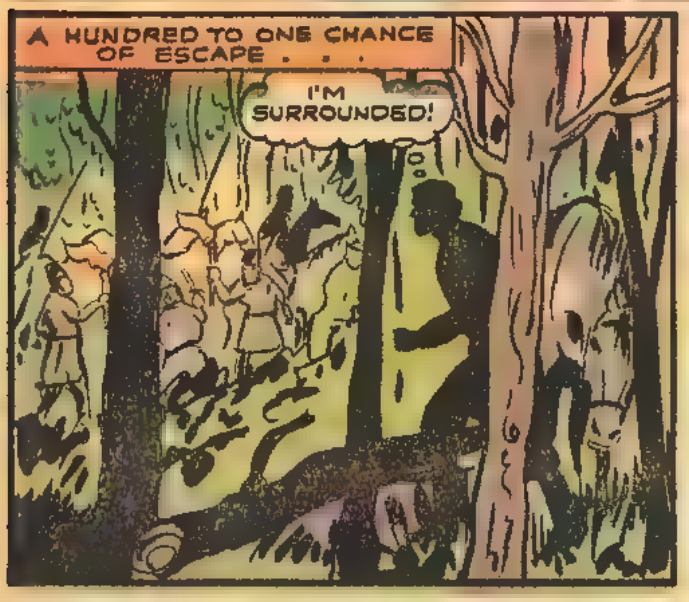
WHEN THE MOMENT ARRIVES, I SHALL KNOW HOW TO MAKE THIS OLD SORCERESS SPEAK!

WHERE THE TURK GOES, NO GRASS GROWS

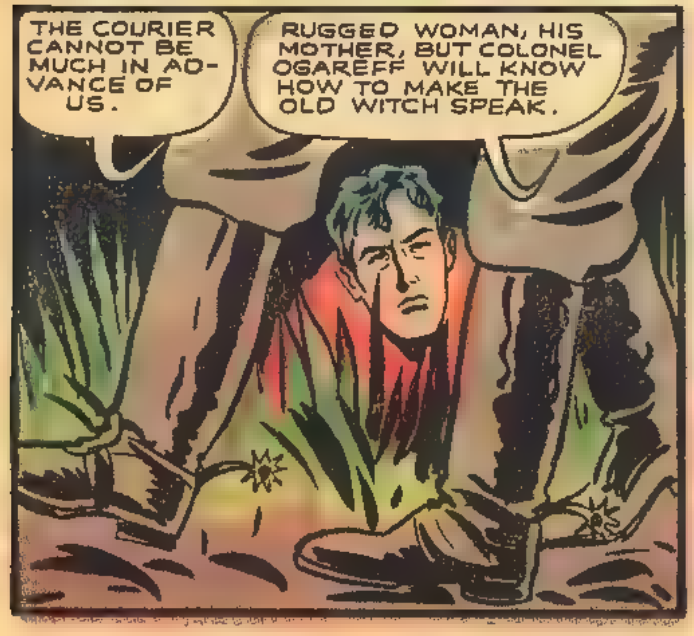

A COURIER CAN NEVER TURN BACK . .

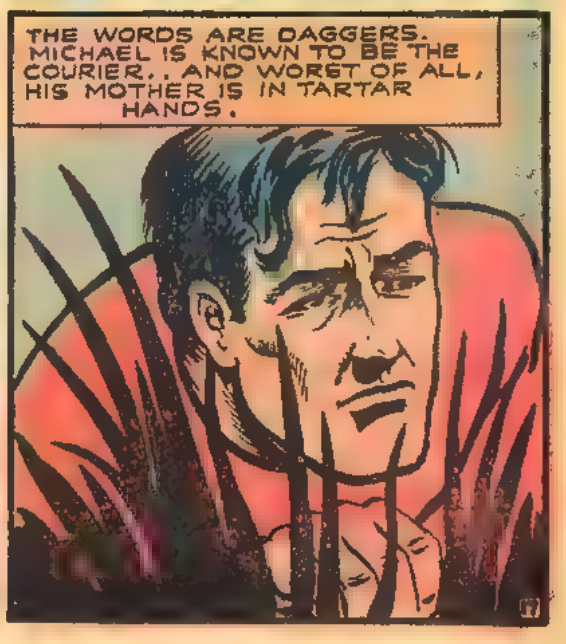

HAVE THE TARTARS PASSED THIS WAY?
NEED YOU ASK? LOOK AT OUR HOME!


EAR TO THE GROUND, HE LISTENS . . .
A DETACHMENT OF CAVALRY COMING FROM OMSK.


A HUNDRED TO ONE CHANCE OF ESCAPE . . .
I'M SURROUNDED!

FROM THIS SPOT I CAN OVERHEAR THEM.


THE COURIER CANNOT BE MUCH IN ADVANCE OF US.
RUGGED WOMAN, HIS MOTHER, BUT COLONEL OGAREFF WILL KNOW HOW TO MAKE THE OLD WITCH SPEAK.

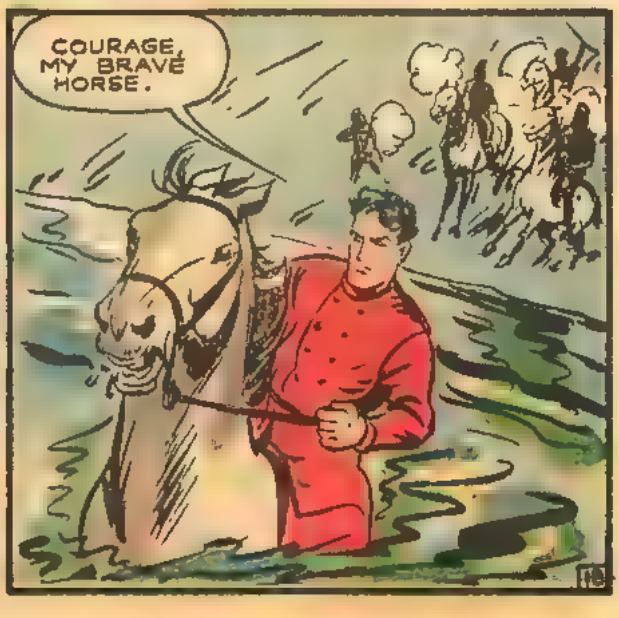

THE WORDS ARE DAGGERS. MICHAEL IS KNOWN TO BE THE COURIER. . AND WORST OF ALL, HIS MOTHER IS IN TARTAR HANDS.

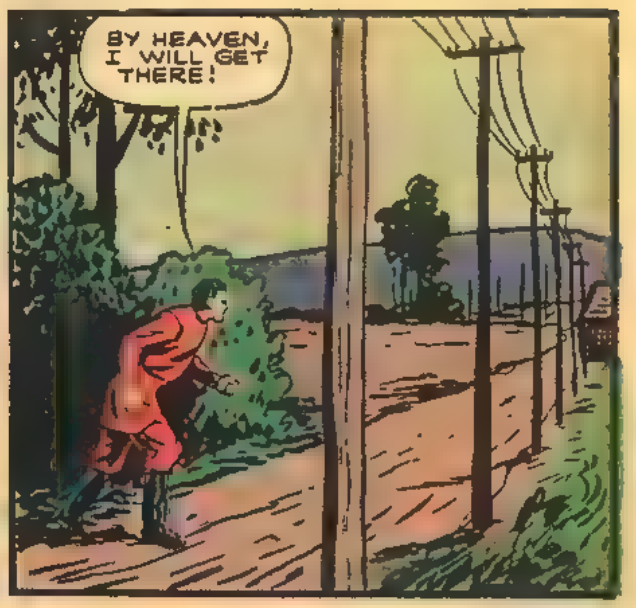
A DESPERATE CHANCE.
HEAVEN IS WITH ME! A STRAY HORSE!

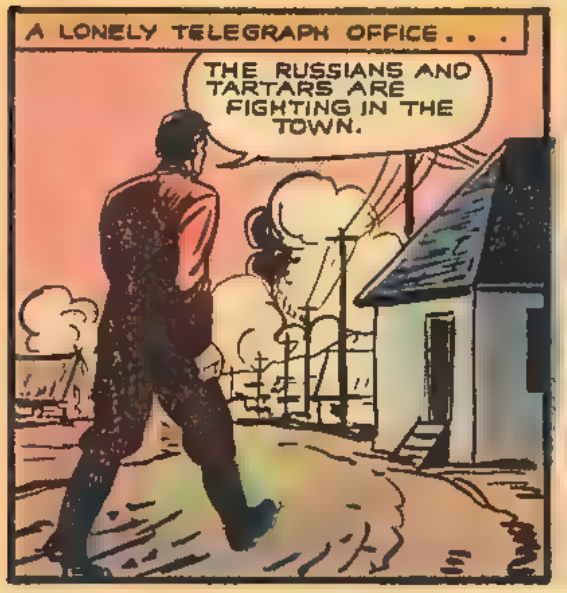
ONLY ONE WAY LIES OPEN.. THE HIGHROAD!

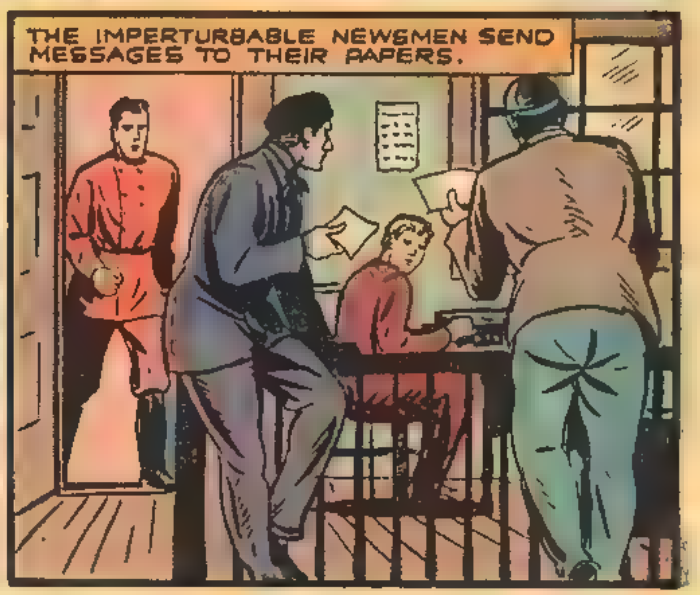
LOOK OUT!

MICHAEL'S HORSE IS BECOMING WEAKER...

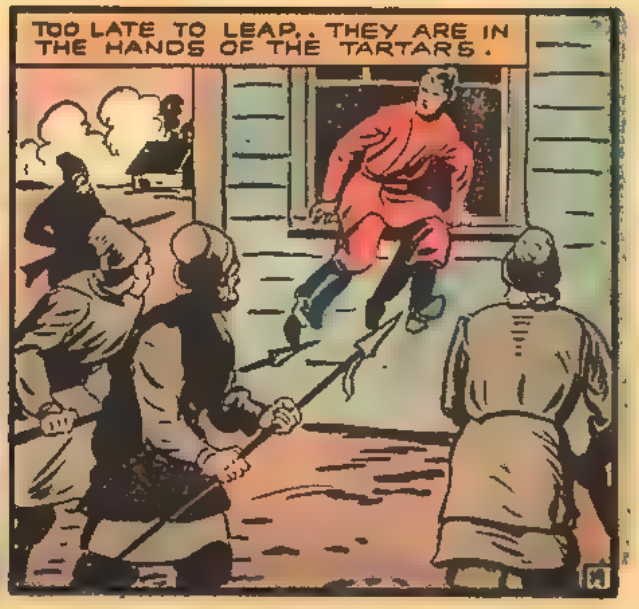

COURAGE, MY BRAVE HORSE.


BY HEAVEN, I WILL GET THERE!

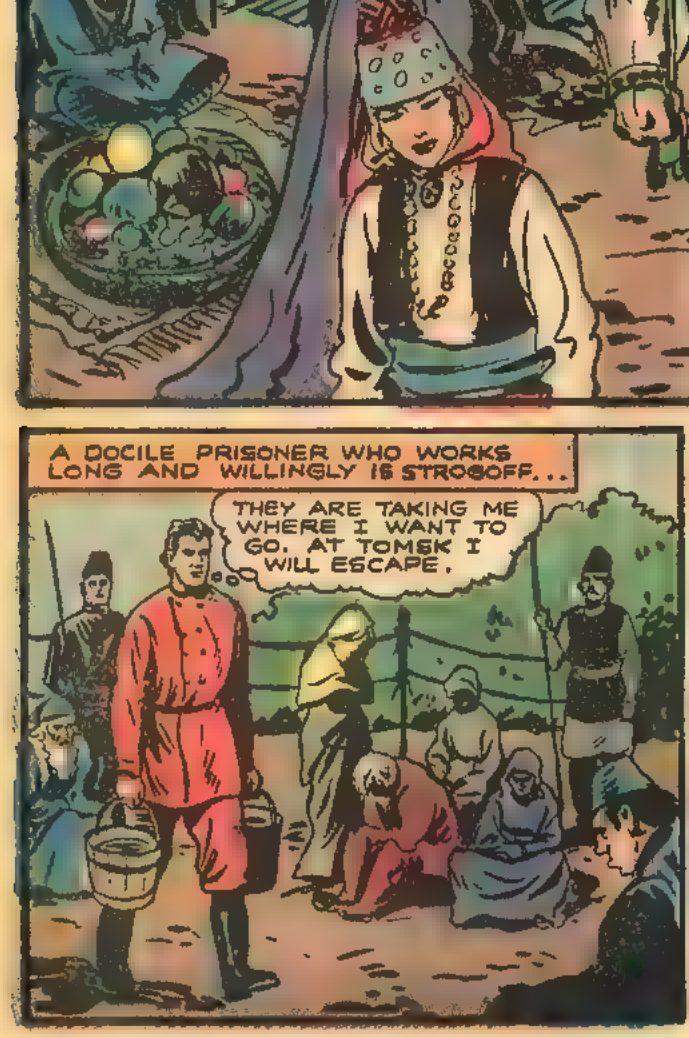

A LONELY TELEGRAPH OFFICE . . .
THE RUSSIANS AND TARTARS ARE FIGHTING IN THE TOWN.


THE IMPERTURBABLE NEWSMEN SEND MESSAGES TO THEIR PAPERS.

BUT RENEWED FIRING BREAKS OUT . . .


TOO LATE TO LEAP.. THEY ARE IN THE HANDS OF THE TARTARS.

THE TARTAR'S CAMP IS BREATHTAKING IN ITS BARBARIC SPLENDOR.



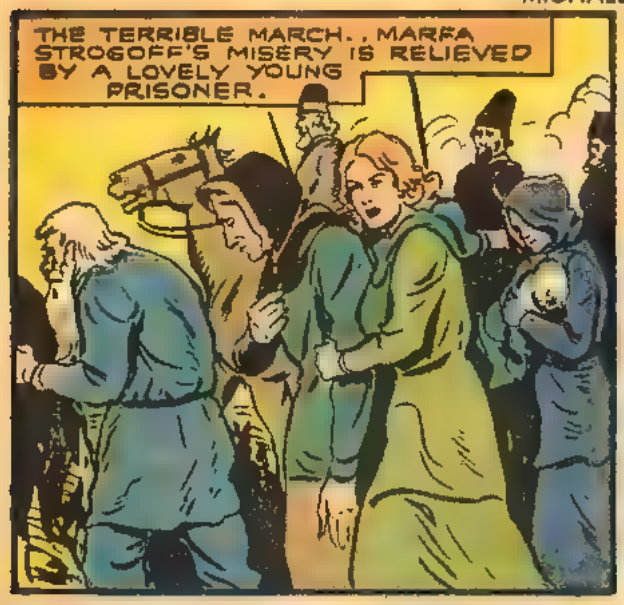
A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS GREETS THE ARRIVAL OF THE TYRANT OGAREFF.

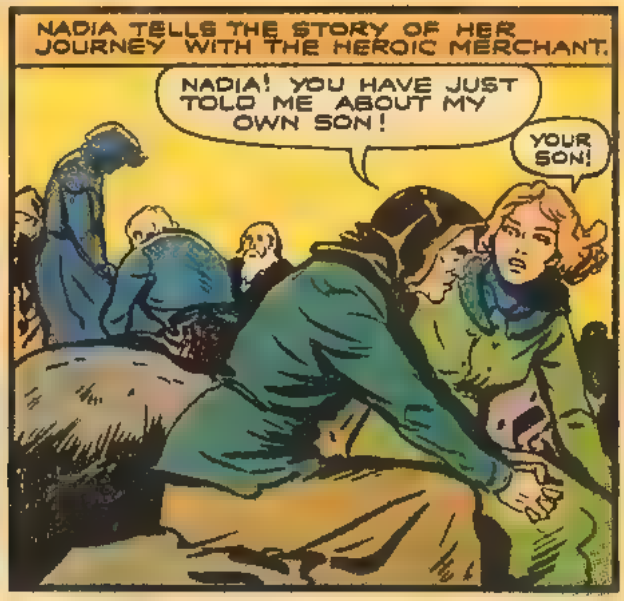
HIS PAID SPY REPORTS. . .
NOTHING?
NOTHING.

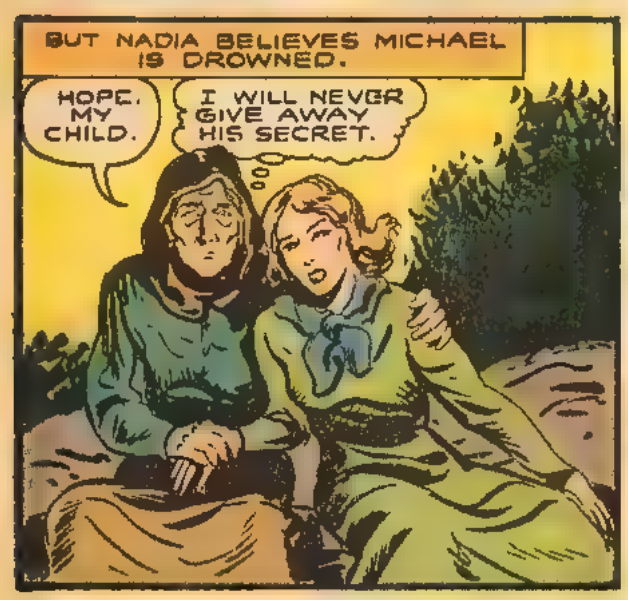
IS THE TIME APPROACHING WHEN YOU WILL FORCE THE OLD WOMAN TO SPEAK?
IT IS APPROACHING, SANGARRE.
AS THE TWO MEN GLADLY MAKE FOR TOMSK. . .
IVAN IS GREETED BY FEOFAR KHAN, EMIR OF THE TURKS

THE CORRESPONDENTS ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS AS NEWSMEN.
WE ASK TO BE FREED!
YOU ARE FREE, GENTLEMEN.

WE MARCH TO MEET THE SUN. . TO TAKE IRKUTSK. THE GRAND DUKE WILL FALL INTO OUR HANDS
GOOD!


THE TERRIBLE MARCH.. MARFA STROGOFF'S MISERY IS RELIEVED BY A LOVELY YOUNG PRISONER.


NADIA TELLS THE STORY OF HER JOURNEY WITH THE HEROIC MERCHANT.
NADIA! YOU HAVE JUST TOLD ME ABOUT MY OWN SON!
YOUR SON!


BUT NADIA BELIEVES MICHAEL IS DROWNED.
HOPE. MY CHILD.
I WILL NEVER GIVE AWAY HIS SECRET.

THE MARCH BRINGS A BURNING THIRST AND. . .
IT IS HE . HE LIVES!
STAY, MY DAUGHTER!

DO NOT MAKE A STEP TOWARDS HIM.. IMITATE ME.

MARFA'S SON IS A PRISONER IN THE ENCAMPMENT.
WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?!

TERRIBLE ANXIETY KEEPS THE TWO FRIENDS AWAKE. . . INSTINCTIVE PRUDENCE KEEPS THEM SILENT.

DRIVEN BY WHIPS, THE PRISONERS FORM A CIRCLE. . .

THE KNOUT!
TO THE DEATH. BEGIN!

MARFA STROGOFF.. POINT OUT YOUR SON TO ME.
NO, NEVER!

MY MOTHER!

THE MAN I STRUCK IN THE POST HOUSE!
DROP THAT, YOU FIEND!

MICHAEL STROGOFF!

NOW.. SEARCH HIM!

BLOW FOR BLOW, ONE FOR EACH YOU GAVE HER!
SIEZE HIM, YOU FOOLS! SIEZE HIM!
WELL REPAID.

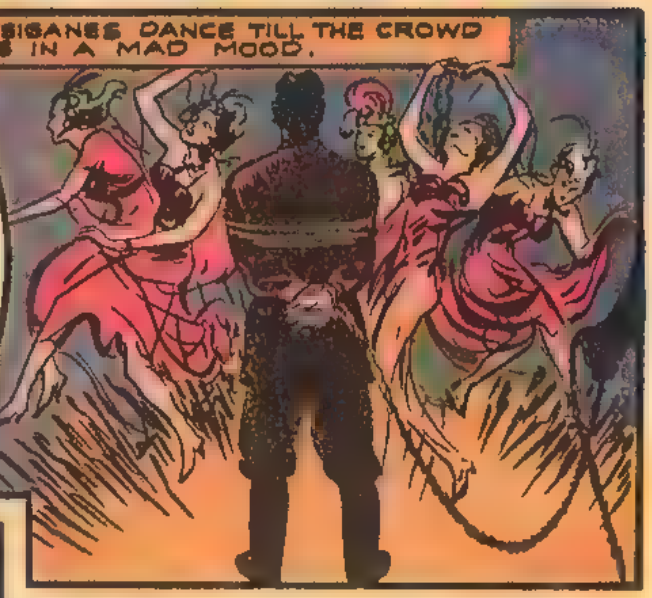
THE CZAR'S LETTER CHANGES HANDS.
AH! AT LAST I HAVE WHAT I WANT, EVEN AT THE COST OF A BUTCHERED FACE!

FEOFAR-KHAN'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO TOMSK.

NOW! YOU SHALL DIE!
YOUR TRAITOR'S FACE WILL CARRY FOREVER THE BRAND OF THE KNOUT.

IVAN STRIKES WITH A LIE. . .
WHO IS THIS PRISONER?
A RUSSIAN SPY.

RUSSIAN SPY. THEN LOOK WHILE YOU MAY!

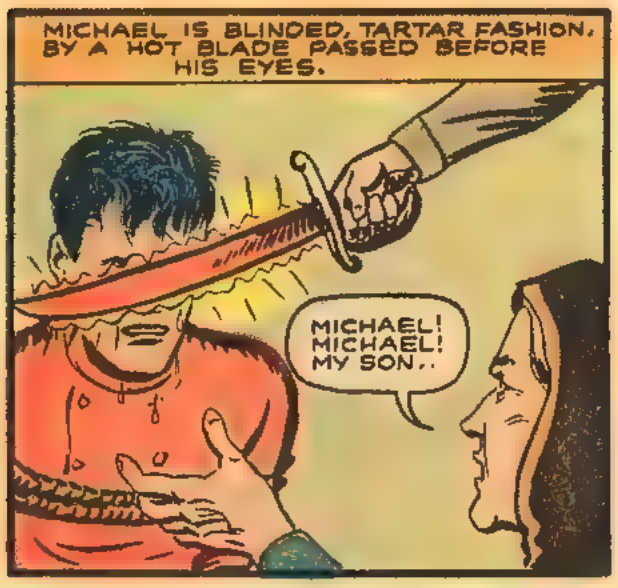

TSIGANES DANCE TILL THE CROWD IS IN A MAD MOOD.

LAVISH AS ROBBERS.
AND JUST AS FOOLISH!
A COIN FOR ONE AND ALL!

YOU HAVE SEEN FOR THE LAST TIME. IN AN INSTANT YOUR EYES WILL BE FOREVER SHUT TO THE LIGHT OF DAY.
YOU CONDEMN THE WRONG MAN, SIRE.
SILENCE!

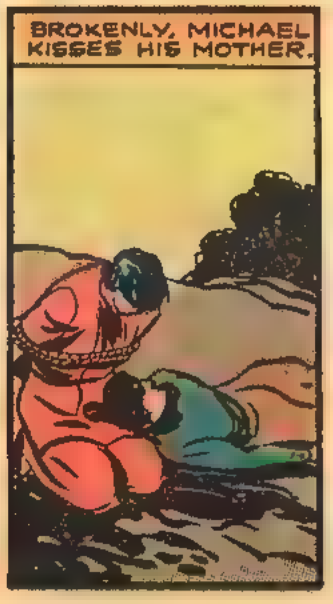
IVAN, THE TRAITOR, THE LAST MENACE IN MY EYES SHALL BE FOR YOU.

MY MOTHER! NOW I SEE ONCE MORE YOUR WELL BE-LOVED FACE.


MICHAEL IS BLINDED, TARTAR FASHION, BY A HOT BLADE PASSED BEFORE HIS EYES.
MICHAEL! MICHAEL! MY SON..

HIS ORDERS EXECUTED, THE EMIR RETIRES WITH HIS TRAIN.
MOTHER! WHERE ARE YOU.

READ NOW.. AND GO AND REPEAT AT IRKUTSK WHAT YOU HAVE READ. THE TRUE COURIER OF THE CZAR IS IVAN OGAREFF.
BEAST!

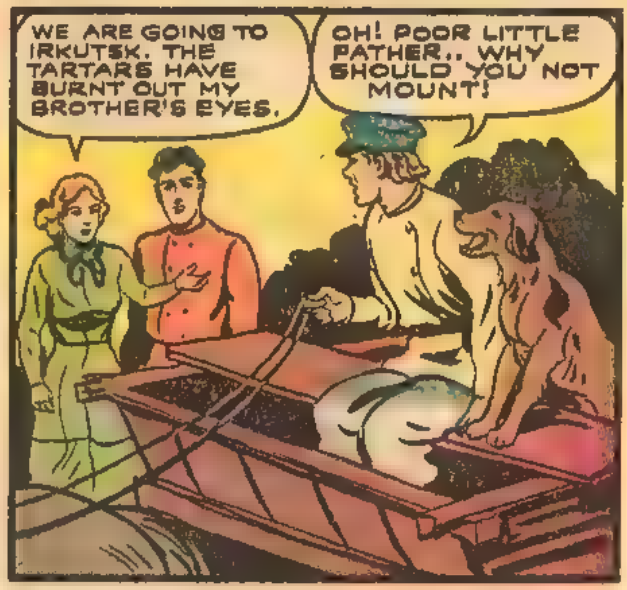

BROKENLY, MICHAEL KISSES HIS MOTHER.

NADIA, NADIA
COME, BROTHER, I WILL LEAD YOU TO IRKUTSK

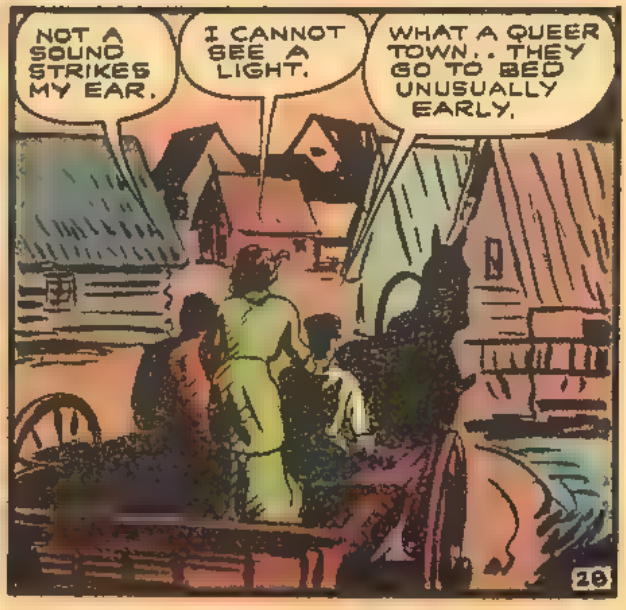
THE ROAD TO IRKUTSK...
YOU ARE A TRUE FRIEND, NADIA!
HUSH!

I WILL GO TO IRKUTSK AND REPEAT ALL I HAVE HEARD.. THE TRAITOR SHALL MEET ME FACE TO FACE.. BUT I MUST ARRIVE BEFORE HIM.
I WILL GO WITH YOU, MICHAEL.

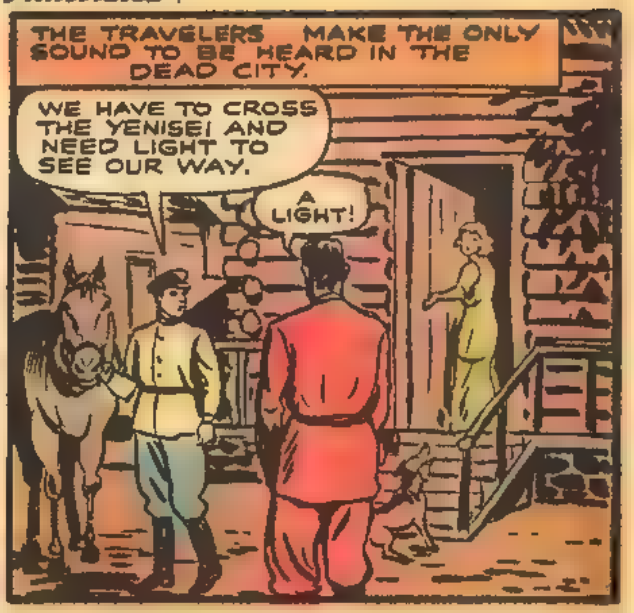
IS THERE SOMEONE ON THE ROAD?
YES, A YOUNG MAN WITH A CART.


WE ARE GOING TO IRKUTSK. THE TARTARS HAVE BURNT OUT MY BROTHER'S EYES.
OH! POOR LITTLE FATHER.. WHY SHOULD YOU NOT MOUNT!

GET DOWN, SERKO! MY NAME IS NICHOLAS PIGASOFF.
IT IS A NAME I WILL NEVER FORGET.
NOR I.


NOT A SOUND STRIKES MY EAR.
I CANNOT SEE A LIGHT.
WHAT A QUEER TOWN.. THEY GO TO BED UNUSUALLY EARLY.

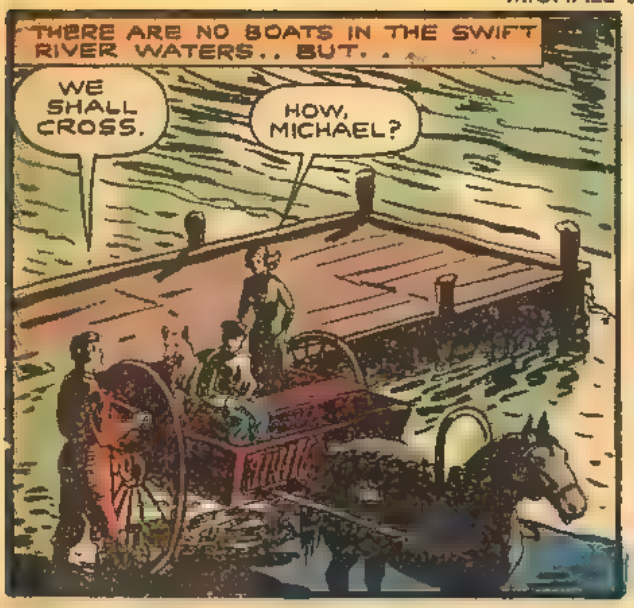
COMPLETE DESOLATION GREETS THEM. AND IT IS UNCOMMON FOR A RUSSIAN TOWN NOT TO BE FILLED WITH THE SOUND OF ITS BELLS.

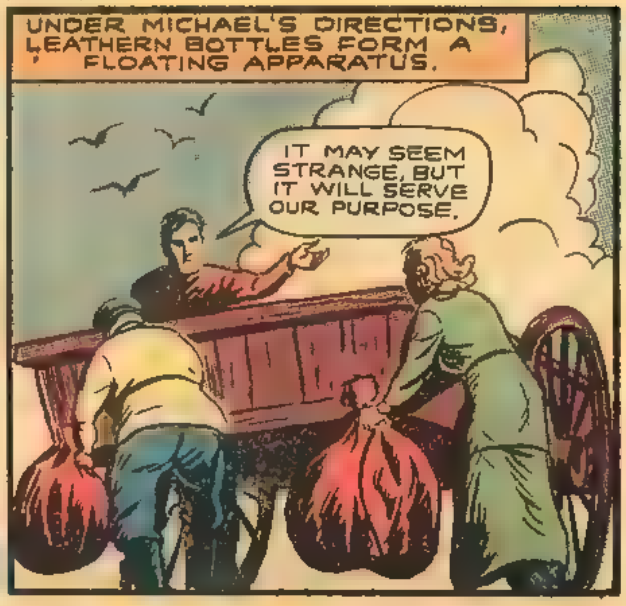

THE TRAVELERS MAKE THE ONLY SOUND TO BE HEARD IN THE DEAD CITY.
WE HAVE TO CROSS THE YENISEI AND NEED LIGHT TO SEE OUR WAY.
A LIGHT!

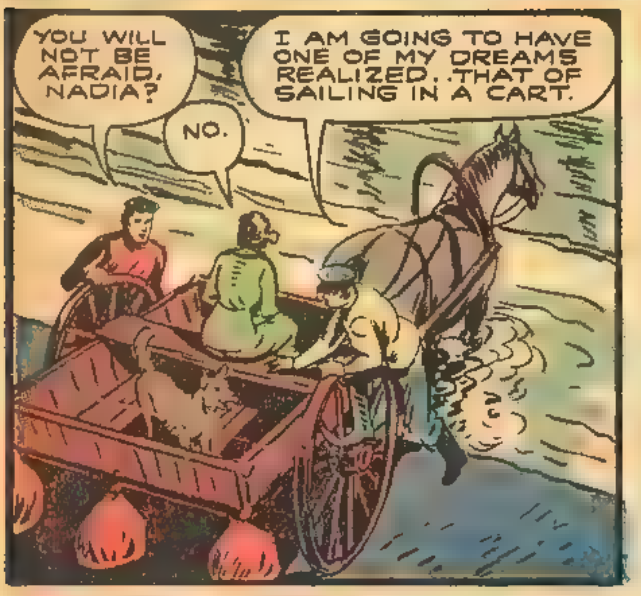
TO SEE!
FORGIVE ME, ALAS! NIGHT AND DAY ARE THE SAME TO YOU.

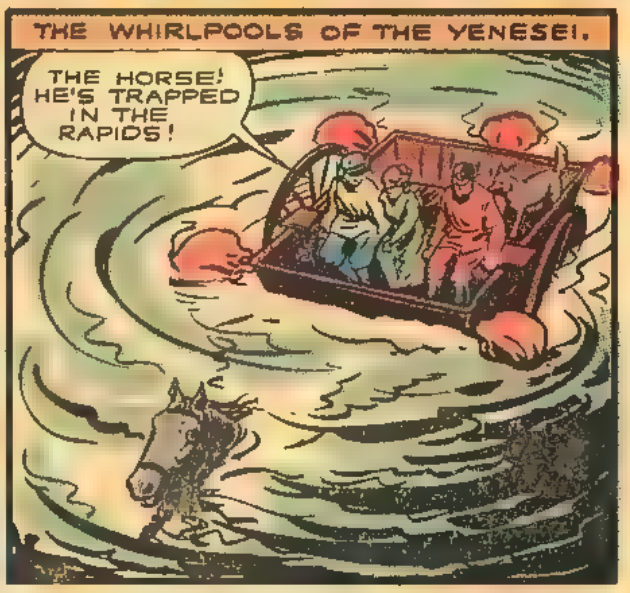
A NEW CAUSE FOR ANXIETY.. HAVE ALL THE BOATS BEEN DESTROYED TO RETARD THE TARTAR'S MARCH?

CAN YOU SEE A BOAT? I HEAR THE WATER ROARING.
HAVE PATIENCE, LITTLE FATHER.


THERE ARE NO BOATS IN THE SWIFT RIVER WATERS.. BUT. . .
WE SHALL CROSS.
HOW, MICHAEL?


UNDER MICHAEL'S DIRECTIONS, LEATHERN BOTTLES FORM A FLOATING APPARATUS.
IT MAY SEEM STRANGE, BUT IT WILL SERVE OUR PURPOSE.


YOU WILL NOT BE AFRAID, NADIA?
NO.
I AM GOING TO HAVE ONE OF MY DREAMS REALIZED..THAT OF SAILING IN A CART.


THE WHIRLPOOLS OF THE YENESEI.
THE HORSE! HE'S TRAPPED IN THE RAPIDS!

HURRAH!

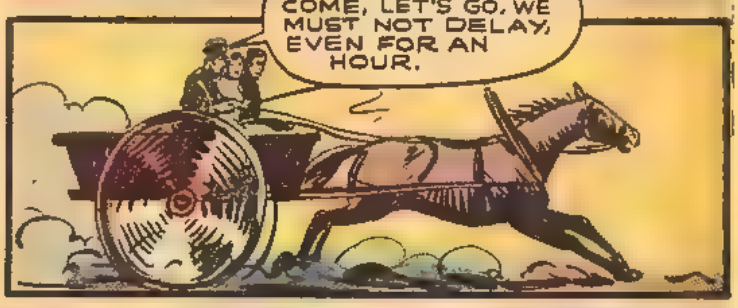
SAFE AGAIN.. THANKS TO YOU, MICHAEL!

ALL THAT COULD NOT BE CARRIED AWAY HAS BEEN DESTROYED BEFORE THE TARTARS CAN SEIZE IT.
WE'LL HAVE TO STOP FOR FOOD SOMEWHERE..

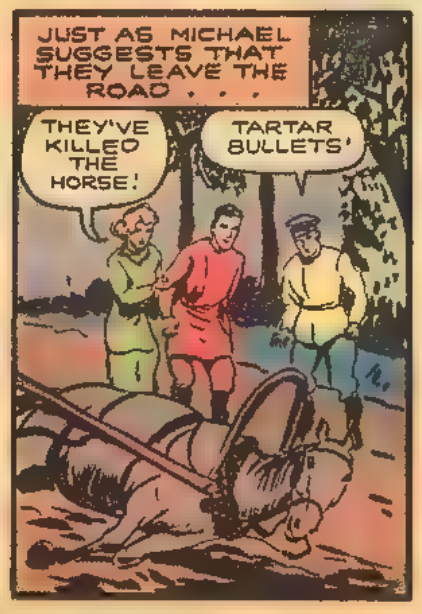
AH!

LIKE THE GREATER NUMBER OF RUSSIANS, NICHOLAS IS SUPERSTITIOUS.
A HARE CROSSING OUR ROAD.. IT IS MY FATE!

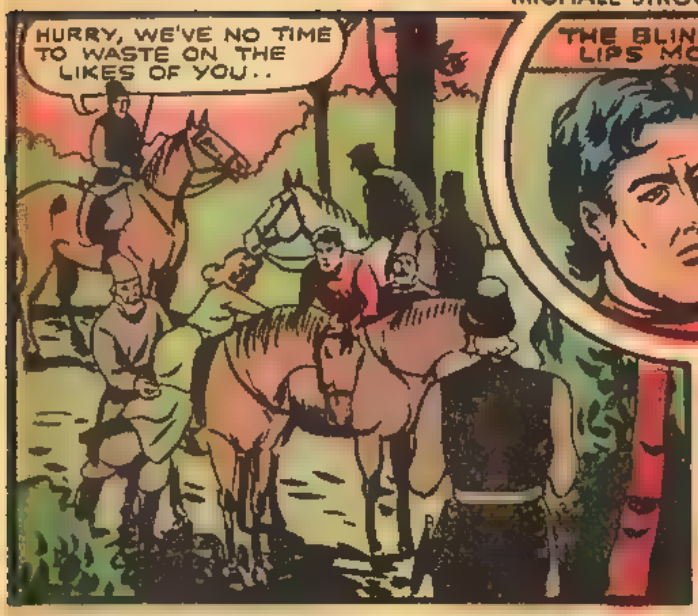
THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR, FRIEND.
NOT FOR YOU, OR FOR HER, BUT FOR ME.

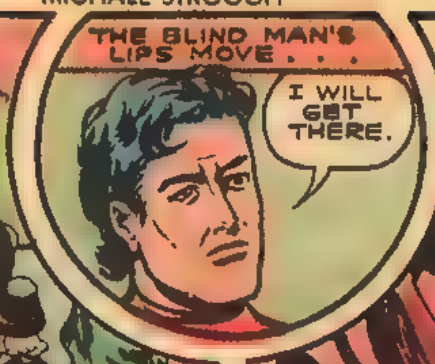

COME, LET'S GO. WE MUST NOT DELAY, EVEN FOR AN HOUR.

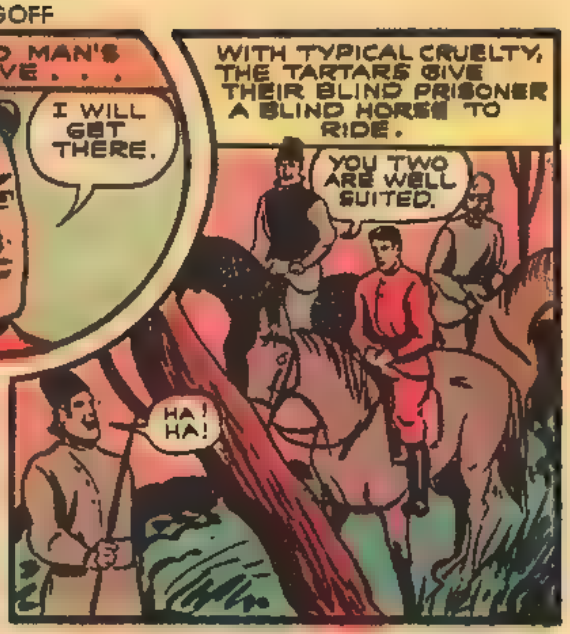
ADVANCE CAUTIOUSLY.
THEY ARE BURNING THE TOWN.


JUST AS MICHAEL SUGGESTS THAT THEY LEAVE THE ROAD . . .
THEY'VE KILLED THE HORSE!
TARTAR BULLETS!

HALT! OR BE SHOT!
OH!

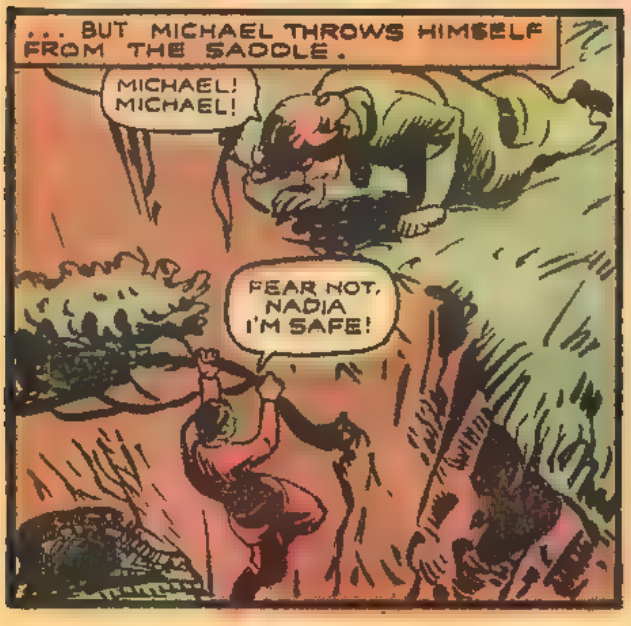

HURRY, WE'VE NO TIME TO WASTE ON THE LIKES OF YOU..

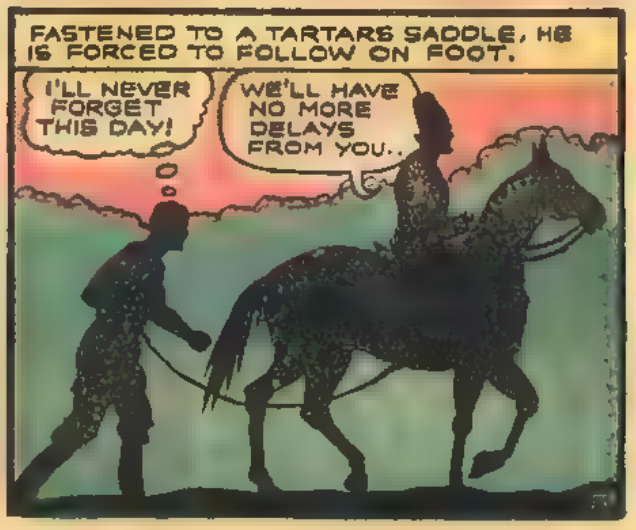

THE BLIND MAN'S LIPS MOVE . . .
I WILL GET THERE.


WITH TYPICAL CRUELTY, THE TARTARS GIVE THEIR BLIND PRISONER A BLIND HORSE TO RIDE.
YOU TWO ARE WELL SUITED.
HA! HA!

COME, YOU BLIND FOOLS.. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO AROUND THE TREE, NOT THROUGH IT!
YOU DEVIL!

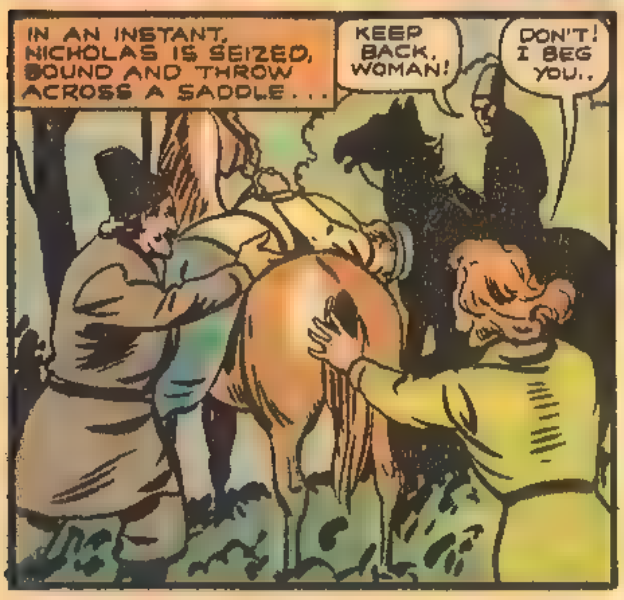
SUDDENLY, NADIA UTTERS A PIERCING CRY. . .
MICHAEL!


. . . BUT MICHAEL THROWS HIMSELF FROM THE SADDLE.
MICHAEL! MICHAEL!
FEAR NOT, NADIA I'M SAFE!

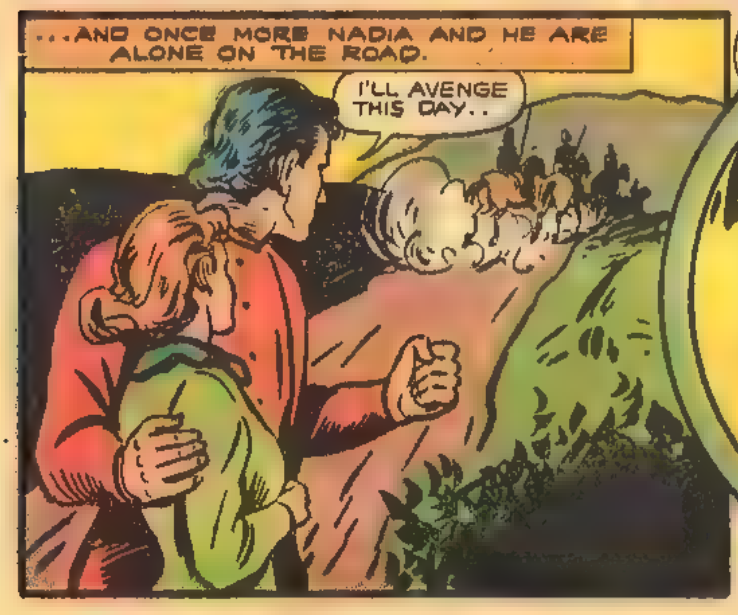

FASTENED TO A TARTARS SADDLE, HE IS FORCED TO FOLLOW ON FOOT.
I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS DAY!
WE'LL HAVE NO MORE DELAYS FROM YOU..

NO! NO! PLEASE!
A LITTLE KISS, MAID, EH?
SWINE!

...BUT IT IS TOO MUCH FOR NICHOLAS.
WHY YOU...
OH!
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF THE GIRL!


IN AN INSTANT, NICHOLAS IS SEIZED, BOUND AND THROW ACROSS A SADDLE...
KEEP BACK, WOMAN!
DON'T! I BEG YOU..

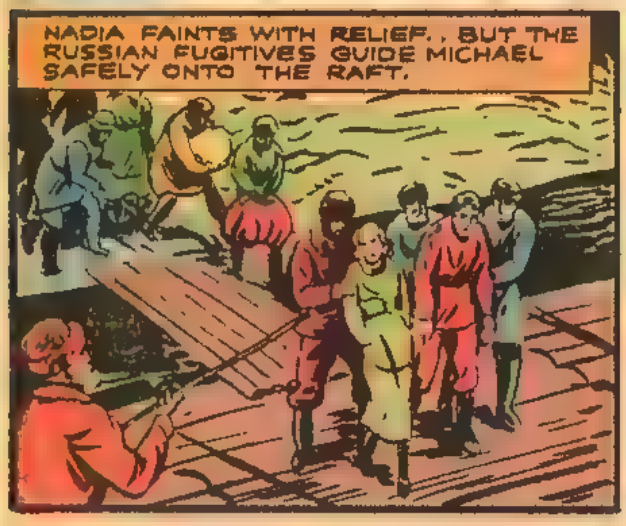
MICHAEL BITES THROUGH HIS BONDS...
HE DOESN'T MISS ME.. I AM FREE.


...AND ONCE MORE NADIA AND HE ARE ALONE ON THE ROAD.
I'LL AVENGE THIS DAY..

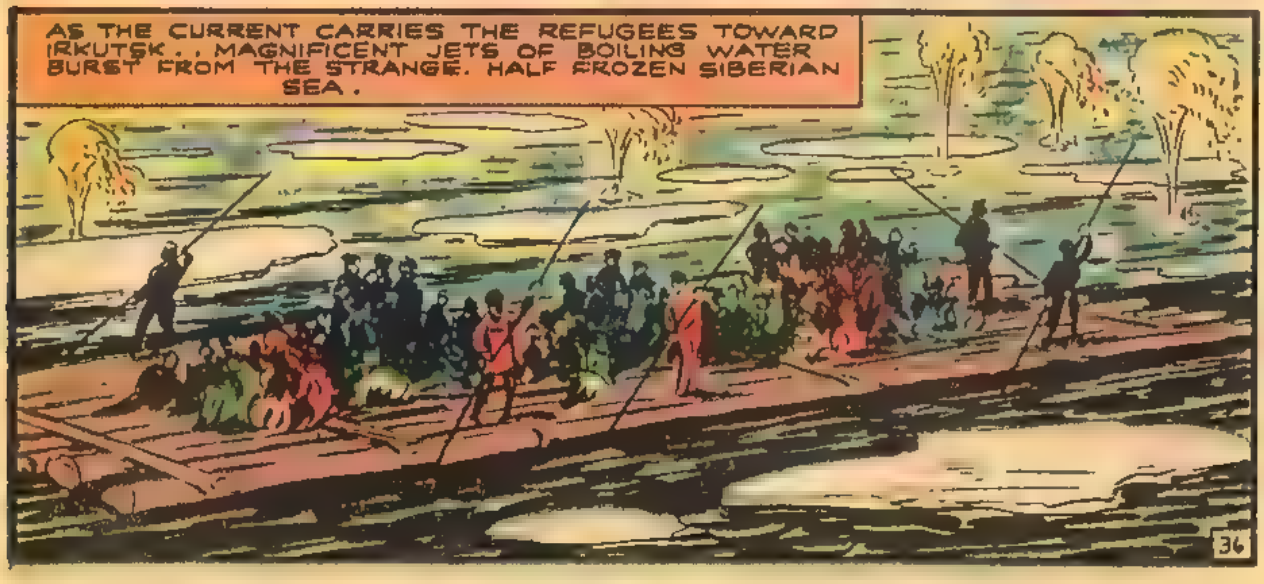
WHAT WILL THEY DO TO OUR FRIEND, POOR NICHOLAS?

FORWARD THROUGH A MOUNTAIN PASS TO LAKE BAIKAL.
AROUND THIS BEND, THEN WE'LL BE THERE, NADIA..
LISTEN! I HEAR VOICES!

THANK HEAVEN!
RUSSIANS!

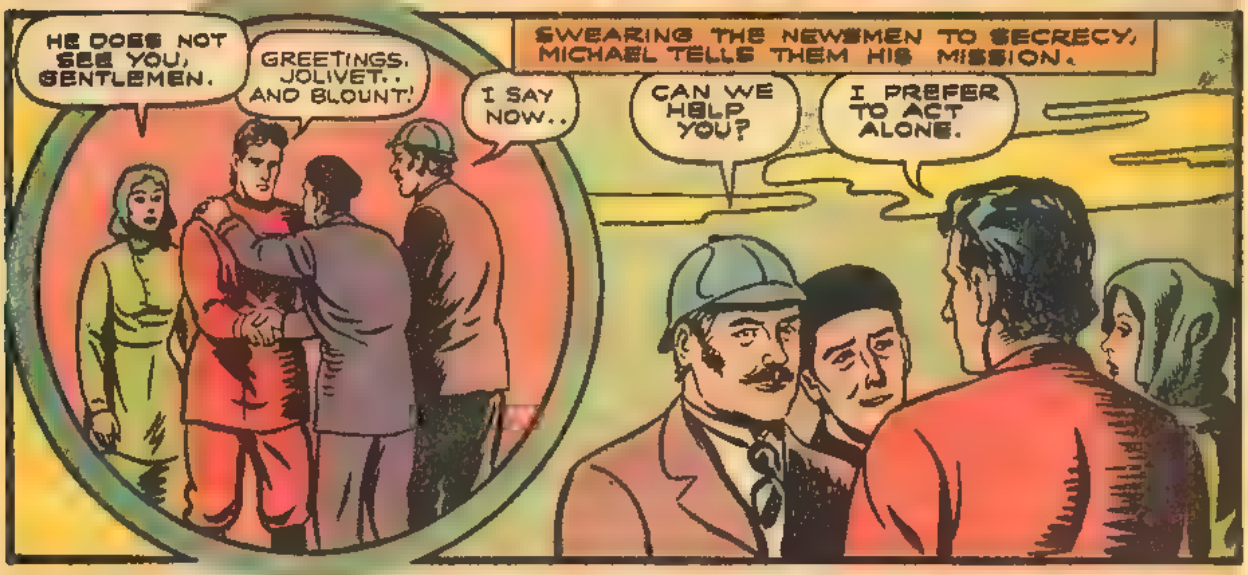

NADIA FAINTS WITH RELIEF.. BUT THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVES GUIDE MICHAEL SAFELY ONTO THE RAFT.

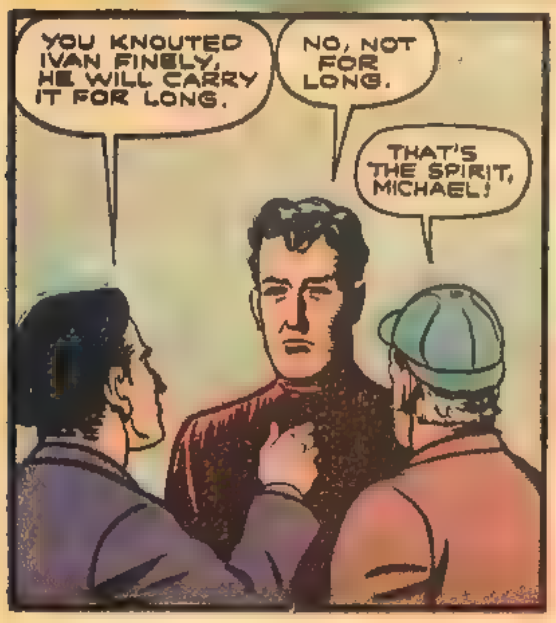
REST AT LAST ON A BED OF LEAVES.

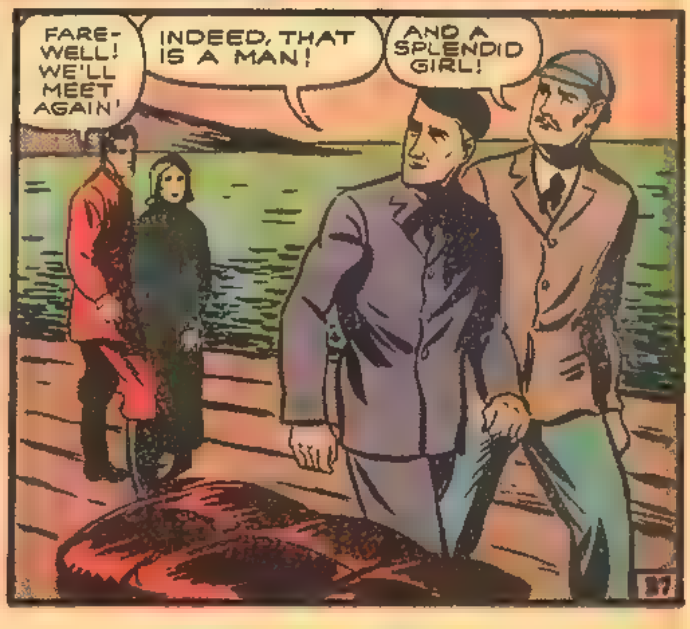

AS THE CURRENT CARRIES THE REFUGEES TOWARD IRKUTSK.. MAGNIFICENT JETS OF BOILING WATER BURST FROM THE STRANGE, HALF FROZEN SIBERIAN SEA.

NO ONE PAYS HERE. EVERYONE RISKS HIS LIFE. THAT IS ALL.
WELL, WELL! LOOK WHO'S HERE!

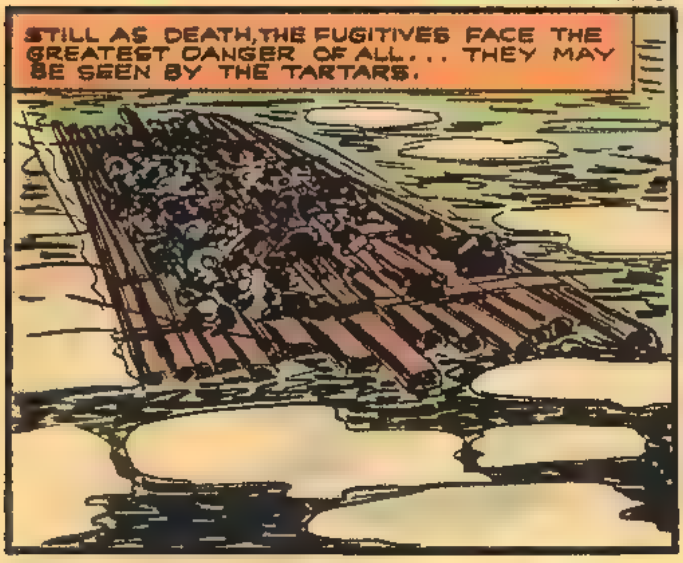
WHAT IS THE MATTER, NADIA?
OUR TWO TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.


HE DOES NOT SEE YOU, GENTLEMEN.
GREETINGS, JOLIVET.. AND BLOUNT!
SWEARING THE NEWSMEN TO SECRECY, MICHAEL TELLS THEM HIS MISSION.
I SAY NOW..
CAN WE HELP YOU?
I PREFER TO ACT ALONE.


YOU KNOUTED IVAN FINELY, HE WILL CARRY IT FOR LONG.
NO, NOT FOR LONG.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, MICHAEL!


FARE-WELL! WE'LL MEET AGAIN!
INDEED, THAT IS A MAN!
AND A SPLENDID GIRL!

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS THE RAFT SLIPS INTO THE RIVER ABOVE IRKUTSK. THE COLD IS INTENSE... NOT A WORD IS SPOKEN... THE TARTARS LINE THE BANKS.
JOLIVET KEEPS A DISCOVERY TO HIMSELF. THE WATER IS COVERED WITH NAPTHA... ONE SPARK AND IT WILL BECOME A SEA OF FLAMES!
A FIGHT WITHOUT FIREARMS.. ONLY THE HOWLS OF THE WOLF PACK FILL THE AIR.
TARTARS?
WOLVES, WE MUST DEFEND OURSELVES WITHOUT NOISE.
THEIR EYES GLOWING LIKE RED HOT COALS, THE WOLVES COME ON AND ON.
SAVED! FRIGHTENED BY THE GLARE OF A BURNING TOWN, THE WOLVES MAKE OFF.


STILL AS DEATH, THE FUGITIVES FACE THE GREATEST DANGER OF ALL... THEY MAY BE SEEN BY THE TARTARS.

FEND OFF WITH YOUR BOAT HOOKS!

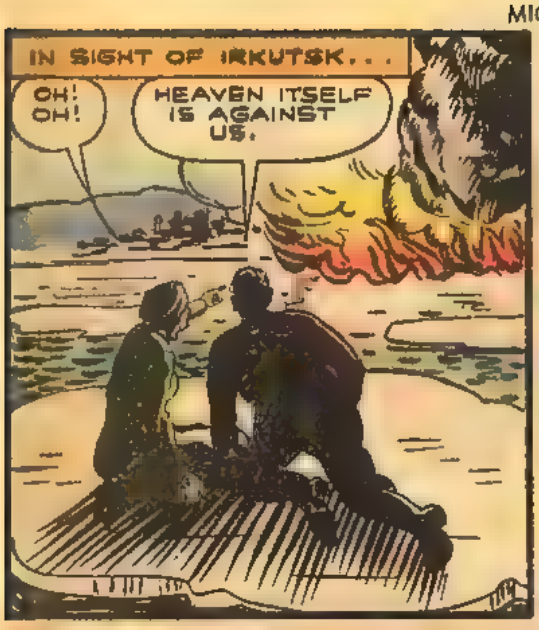
AGAIN AND AGAIN THE ICE HALTS THEM AND THE MEN WORK FRANTICALLY, BUT FINALLY..

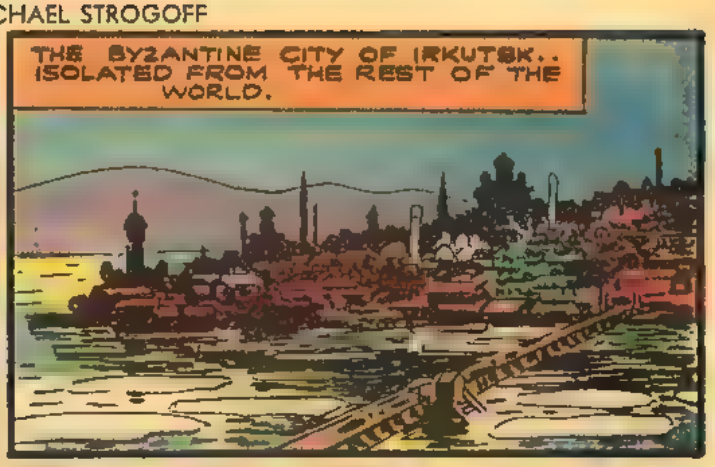
..AN UNWISE MOVEMENT GIVES THEIR POSITION AWAY.

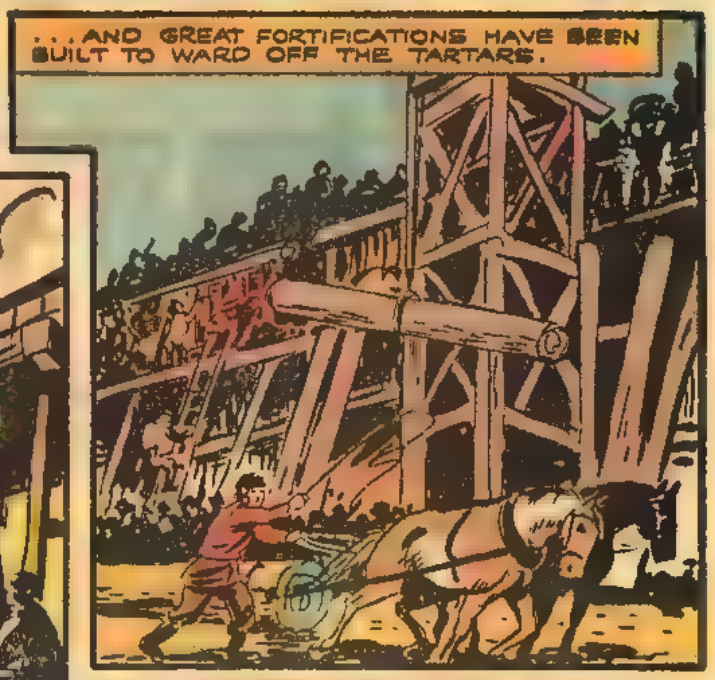
NADIA, WE MUST CROSS THE BARRIER. GUIDE ME.

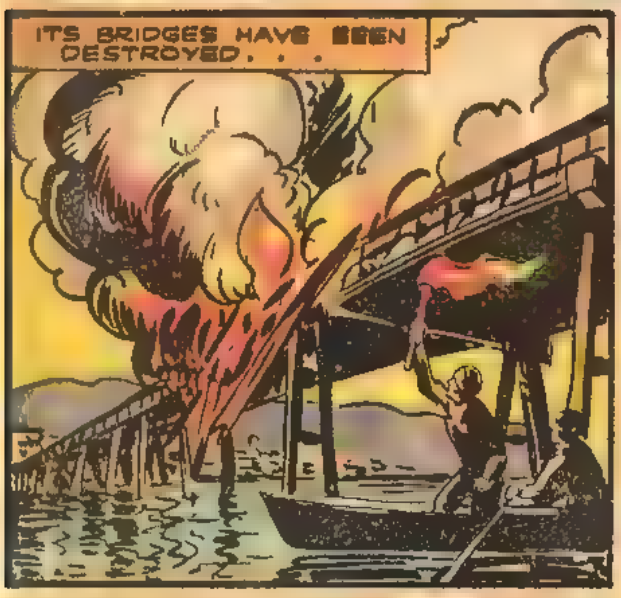
DON'T HEED THE BULLETS, JUST RUN.. RUN!

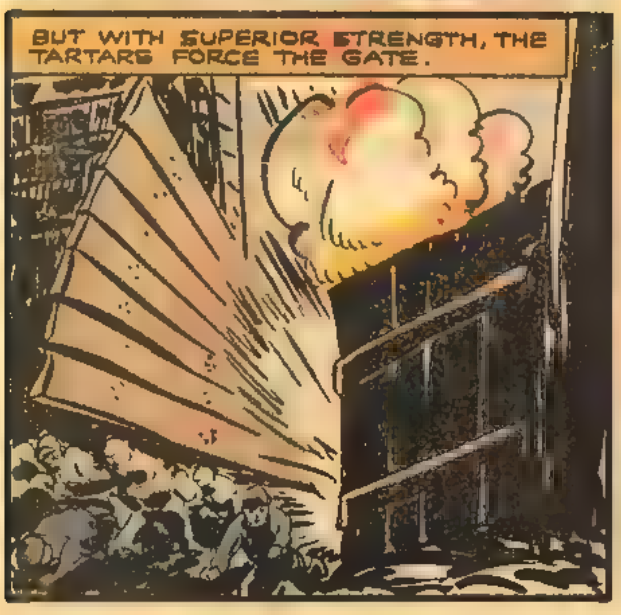
LITTLE BY LITTLE THE CRIES OF DISTRESS AND YELLS OF THE TARTARS GROW FAINT.
OUR POOR COMPANIONS!


IN SIGHT OF IRKUTSK...
OH! OH!
HEAVEN ITSELF IS AGAINST US.


THE BYZANTINE CITY OF IRKUTSK.. ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD.

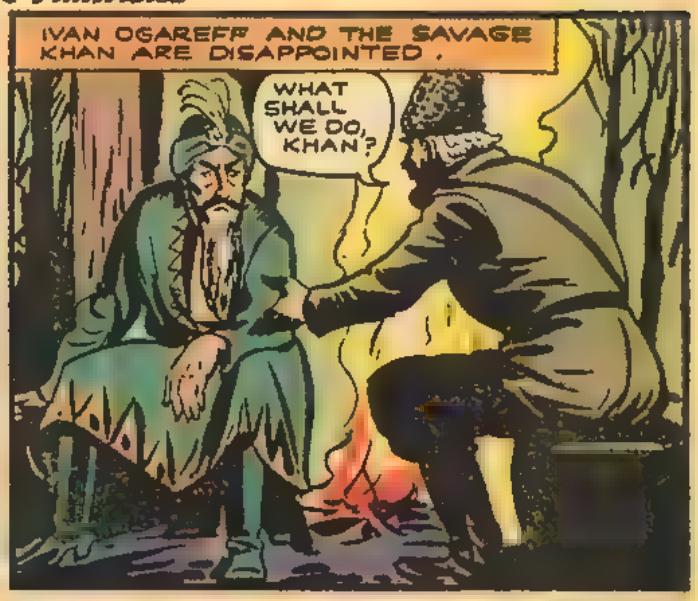

...AND GREAT FORTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN BUILT TO WARD OFF THE TARTARS.


ITS BRIDGES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. . .

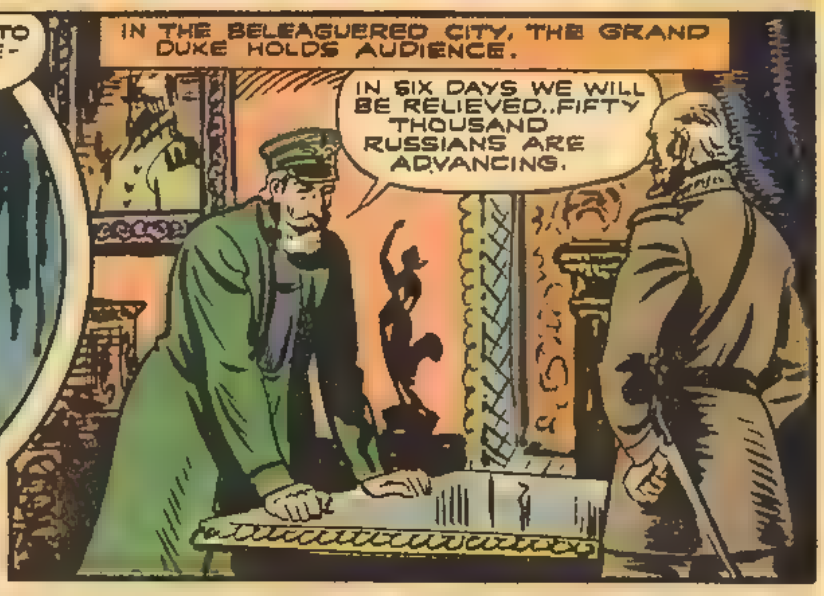

BUT WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH, THE TARTARS FORCE THE GATE.

COSSACKS AND CITIZENS PUT UP SUCH A FIERCE FIGHT.. THE TARTARS TAKE TO FLIGHT.

WITH DETERMINED HEARTS AND WELL AIMED RIFLES, THE RUSSIANS TAKE A HEAVY TOLL OF THE FLEEING TARTARS. . .


IVAN OGAREFF AND THE SAVAGE KHAN ARE DISAPPOINTED.
WHAT SHALL WE DO, KHAN?

THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO DO.. IRKUTSK MUST BE BETRAYED FROM INSIDE.


IN THE BELEAGUERED CITY, THE GRAND DUKE HOLDS AUDIENCE.
IN SIX DAYS WE WILL BE RELIEVED..FIFTY THOUSAND RUSSIANS ARE ADVANCING.

WASSILI FEDOR, NADIA'S FATHER..ELECTED BY THE TOWN'S EXILES TO LEAD THEM IN THEIR FIGHT FOR RUSSIA.
GOOD LUCK!
THANK YOU, SIR!

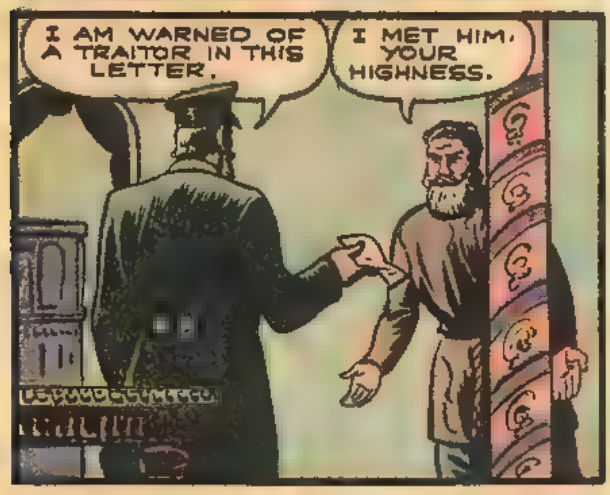
THEY MUST MAKE UP THEIR MINDS TO BE KILLED TO THE LAST MAN.
THEY ARE NOT IGNORANT OF IT.

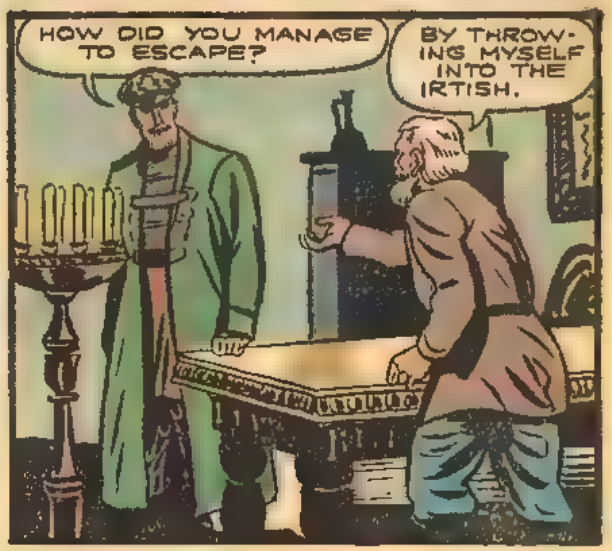
CAPTAIN FEDOR, RELEASE THE MEN IN SIBERIA WHOM WE CALL EXILES.. THEY ARE FREE... TO FIGHT!

WASSILI FEDOR IS OVERCOME WITH EMOTION.. NO LONGER FORCED TO LIVE IN SIBERIA.. THE EXILES WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH.. THOSE WHO SURVIVE WILL RETURN TO RUSSIA.
YOU ARE DOING A GREAT THING, SIR!
A TUMULT OUTSIDE THE PALACE.
LET ME PASS! I MUST SEE THE GRAND DUKE!
YOUR HIGHNESS, A COURIER FROM THE CZAR!
APPARENTLY EXHAUSTED, A RAGGED FIGURE ADVANCES.
YOUR NAME?
MICHAEL STROGOFF.
HE CANNOT RECOGNIZE ME.
THE GRAND DUKE CANNOT SUPPRESS A FEELING OF DISTRUST. . .
YOU HAVE A LETTER FROM THE CZAR?
HERE IT IS.
THIS LETTER ENJOINS US ALL TO DIE RATHER THAN GIVE UP.
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
THAT SEEMS HARD TO BELIEVE!

THE TRAITOR EXAGGERATES THE POWER OF THE TARTAR ARMY.
YOU LIE!
I SPEAK THE TRUTH, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WELL, HEAR THIS, MICHAEL STROGOFF, I WILL NEVER GIVE UP IRKUTSK.
THAT IS NOT WISE, SIRE!


I AM WARNED OF A TRAITOR IN THIS LETTER.
I MET HIM, YOUR HIGHNESS.


HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO ESCAPE?
BY THROWING MYSELF INTO THE IRTISH.

YOU HAVE SHOWN COURAGE AND ZEAL. YOU SHALL BE LODGED IN THE PALACE.
THANK YOU.

AND IF IVAN OGAREFF SHOULD PRESENT HIMSELF TO YOU UNDER A FALSE NAME?
I WILL MAKE HIM DIE UNDER THE KNOUT
THUS, IVAN FACES SUCCESS.. THE TOWN IS IN HIS HAND AND DEATH AWAITS THE ARRIVAL OF MICHAEL STROGOFF.

ENTIRELY FREE IN HIS MOVEMENTS THE TRAITOR SEARCHES THE TOWN FOR WEAK POINTS.
WHILE SEVERAL THOUSAND TARTARS STAND READY TO ATTACK THE GATE

THE NIGHT OF THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER.. THE TARTARS ARE ON THE MOVE . . .

WAITING FOR THE HOUR TO STRIKE..LIKE A WILD BEAST READY TO SPRING.
THE TARTARS WILL LONG REMEMBER MY NAME...

..TWO-O-CLOCK! TIME FOR THE FALSE ATTACK TO DRAW THE DEFENDERS AWAY FROM THE GREAT GATE.
FOR I, IVAN OGAREFF, WILL PERPETUATE THEM!

AT LAST! THE TIME HAS COME!

BY OGAREFF'S ORDERS, TORRENTS OF MINERAL OIL HAVE BEEN THROWN ON THE RIVER . . .
THE GATE IS LEFT ALMOST UNGUARDED. . .
AS IVAN OGAREFF GLORIES IN THE SCENE . . .
SANGARRE . . NO!
IVAN OGAREFF!
THE DEFENDERS ARE CAUGHT BETWEEN THE TARTAR ATTACK AND THE TERRIBLE FIRE.
IVAN OGAREFF!
SO IT IS NADIA! SILENCE! YOU WILL NOT LIVE TO TELL WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN!

MICHAEL!
FEAR NOTHING, NADIA!

A BLIND MAN CAN BE NO MATCH!
CLOSE THE DOOR, NADIA.

DEATH TO YOU, STROGOFF!

WHA...
YES, DEATH! BUT NOT FOR ME!

HE SEES? HE SEES?

YES, I SEE.. DEFEND YOURSELF.. MY KNIFE AGAINST YOUR SWORD.

YOUR DAYS OF EVIL ARE ENDED, OGAREFF!
YOU DARE NOT...

AHHH...

WHO KILLED THAT MAN?
I DID!

YOU WILL DIE FOR THIS!

THAT MAN, YOUR HIGHNESS, IS NOT A COURIER. HE IS IVAN OGAREFF.

BUT WHO ARE YOU, THEN?
MICHAEL STROGOFF.
MICHAEL STROGOFF HAS NEVER BEEN BLIND. THE TEARS HE SHED LOOKING FOR THE LAST TIME AT HIS MOTHER, FORMED A PROTECTIVE COAT OF VAPOUR WHICH OFFSET THE EFFECT OF THE BURNING SWORD.
ACTING A PART TO OUT-WIT THE TARTARS, HE HAS SAVED THE DAY...
WHO IS THIS GIRL?
THE DAUGHTER OF WASSILI FEDOR.
NADIA! CHILD!
AS THE FIRE DIES DOWN ON THE WATER.. THE TARTARS ARE REPULSED IN THEIR DOUBLE ATTACK ON THE TOWN...
AMONG THE DEAD IS THE BEAUTIFUL BUT AMBITIOUS TRAITOR, SANGARRE...
A CANNON BOOMS FROM THE HEIGHTS ... THE RELIEVING ARMY HAS ARRIVED.
REENFORCEMENTS! WE ARE SAVED!

IT WILL BE MY JOY TO CALL YOU BOTH MY CHILDREN.
THE PEOPLE OF IRKUTSK SHOW THEIR DEEP GRATITUDE TO THE TWO YOUNG PEOPLE, WHOSE JOURNEY HAS ALREADY BECOME A LEGEND.
I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE..
THEY SPEAK OF TROUBLE IN PEKIN.
BY JOVE, LET'S GO!
TO CHINA!
GOOD LUCK, MEN!
FAREWELL, STROGOFF!
REUNITED AT LAST IN BEAUTIFUL ST. PETERSBURG.
DEAR CHILD!
MOTHER, STROGOFF!
THIS IS THE HAPPIEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE!
MICHAEL STROGOFF RECEIVES THE HIGHEST AWARD..THE CROSS OF ST. GEORGE..PRESENTED BY THE CZAR.
ALL RUSSIA IS GRATEFUL TO YOU, MICHAEL STROGOFF.
THE END

LIFE OF JULES VERNE

The works of Jules Verne, symbolizing the voice of youth, couldn't help but find their place in CLASSIC COMICS. Young people look ahead to the future, dreaming of ways to improve with innovations and inventions, whereas Jules Verne wrote of his dreams of things to come. His great works introduced a new school of literature, describing in a near scientific manner the daring and unbelievable adventures unknown to his contemporaries. Science in those days was still looked upon with doubt and was confined to the laboratories of the die-hards who refused to be discouraged by popular thought.

Today, at the threshold of a thrilling and promising atomic age, Verne's prophecies take on new meaning. We have contacted the moon by radar and although many of us still can't realize what this astronomical communication means, Jules Verne wrote of daring adventures between the moon and the earth before the turn of the century

Jules Verne was born on February 8, 1828 on the island of Faydeau situated in the River Loire near the Bay of Biscay which in those days harbored many of the ships returning from all corners of the world. Raised in an environment rich with tales of the mysterious and enchanting far off places brought back by ships' news, young Verne was naturally aware of the romance and drama of travel.

The family of Verne was traditionally interested in law, and Jules' father, Pierre Verne, was anxious to school his son as a lawyer. As a boy, Jules' life was strongly checked by his father's puritanical ways. Perhaps the oppression of this strict discipline and perhaps the romance incited by "The Swiss Family Robinson" and James Fenimore Cooper's Leather Stocking Tales, caused Jules to turn to the sea during the summer of his 11th year. His father heard of his plans and nipped them in the bud by taking the frustrated young sailor from the ship before it departed from France.

The resultant disciplinary action caused young Jules to confide to his mother, "After this I shall travel only in my imagination." He returned to his studies in Nantes and was graduated into law school at Paris. However, before he started practice as a lawyer, Jules Verne was making a name for himself as a popular author. His first literary works (mostly short plays) were published while he was but a 16 year old clerk in a Nantes law office.

In 1857, he married a young widow, Honorine Morel, and moved her and her two infants into his student's rooms in Paris. Temporarily occupied as a stockbroker, his efforts were constantly being expended in the field of literature. The name of Jules Verne became well known to the reading public when he wrote "The Voyages Extraordinary," a series describing thrilling voyages with the latest inventions of the day. In 1863, the first of these, "5 Weeks in a Balloon" was published, and during the following years he kept his promise to his father by writing plays and scientific articles.

His life came to an end in Amiens, France on the 24th day of March, 1905 but he died knowing that his work had been accepted and acclaimed His books had been crowned by the French Academy and his name added to the roster of the Legion of Honor—two of the highest possible honors accorded a French citizen.